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To whom it may concern,

Remnant Initiatives is a nonprofit organization serving citizens returning from prison to Yamhill County. We support IP44, however, we believe the IP44 Racial and Ethnic Impact Statement created by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, is lacking.

Firstly, the description of the initiative within the impact statement should be more accurate. It should be made clear that the initiative replaces criminal punishments with expanded access to treatment and creates an incentive for getting treatment. At Remnant Initiatives, we work to help our formerly incarcerated neighbors transition back into mainstream society to become law-abiding, tax paying, contributing members of the community. In our experience, too many people who are incarcerated fail to receive adequate substance use treatment and continue to struggle after release. In most cases, a person's need for treatment remains unchanged before and after incarceration. This is why the expanded access to drug treatment and services is of great importance to us. We feel that the study would be incomplete and inaccurate without conveying the entire mission of IP44.

Additionally, we consider the study to be too narrow. While the study addresses racial disparities in drug convictions, it does not discuss arrests. Even without a conviction, arrests are still traumatic and have a costly effect on individuals, their families and thus, our entire community. Even when it does not result in a conviction, an arrest can still show up on criminal background checks and follow a person for far too many years. The study would give a more holistic view of what is actually happening in our state, if it included more information on the breakdown of who is being arrested by race and ethnicity. We are also concerned that the study does not address racial disparities in prosecution, sentencing, and pre-trial jail time, as these disparities are detrimental to the health and well-being of communities of color. Failing to address these disparities is irresponsible and giving voters an incomplete picture.

Lastly, we believe that it is important that the study point out the consequences of having a criminal record on individuals, their families and thus, our entire community. In helping individuals transition back into mainstream society after incarceration, we have first-hand knowledge of how having a criminal record reduces their ability to land a living wage job, stable housing and in some cases professional licensing. Having a criminal record is often the barrier for entering law-abiding, tax paying, contributing citizenry. The study is significantly lacking by not communicating how having a criminal record impacts the safety and well-being of the entire community.

We at Remnant Initiatives support IP44 and, for the most part, support the IP44 Racial and Ethnic Impact Study, but are asking you to address these weaknesses in the study. It should be improved to more accurately describe the initiative, address racial disparities in all areas of our criminal justice system, and the impact of having a criminal record.

Respectfully,  
Jodi Hansen