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Senate President Peter Courtney
House Speaker Tina Kotek
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear President Courtney and Speaker Kotek:

As you prepare for the upcoming special session, I write to encourage you and your colleagues to take prompt and transformational action in the area of police reform.

Like you, I have watched the horrific videos and heard reports of acts of violence against Black individuals and other people of color by police who are sworn to protect and serve them. Across America and here in Oregon, we hear speeches and testimonials about how unacceptable and terrible these acts are and how our leaders feel the pain of Black communities.

Yet, nothing changes and we act as if these horrific events are singular or isolated events. But these are not one-offs. They are the product of a failed justice system that perpetuates racism in America and too often a culture of silence that festers within police forces. We are condemned to relive these tragedies unless we make real change a priority. I applaud the People of Color Caucus for bringing a platform of proposals forward, and I thank the Governor for calling a special session for legislative action.

I also recognize that thoughtful and systemic change cannot happen solely with a special session, but it is an important first step. The state of Oregon also must be committed to review the educational standards for police and to develop rules, training programs and disciplinary codes for appropriate policing to be enforced. I support Governor Kate Brown's announcement last week of the appointment of a Public Safety Training and Standards Task Force as a conduit for this work.

Communities across Oregon and the nation are requesting change. I want you to know I support your efforts and Oregon State University is a committed partner.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Ray
President

Cc: Governor Kate Brown