

Testimony to the Joint Committee on Public Safety

HB 3194 – In support of Reforms to our Public Safety System

Bob Robison, April 3, 2013

This written testimony is in support of the proposed changes in HB 3194

Our criminal justice system is out of balance. We spend too much on prisons, and not enough on behalf of crime victims.

I am the retired Victims Services Manager for Multnomah County Community Justice (parole/probation). In semi-retirement I teach Portland State University students how to work with crime victims. I now volunteer with several organizations working on behalf of crime victims and survivors. As an advocate, I've represented hundreds of crime victims.

As you know, HB 3194 is the result of two high-level Governor's Commissions which have carefully considered and recommended changes to our public safety system. These are very, very smart people. I've followed the work of both Commissions. We should listen to them.

The proposals in HB 3194 are actually quite modest; yet they will save \$600 million that could be reinvested in evidenced-based community corrections and victim services.

For example, these savings could easily fund requests submitted this session by Attorney General Rosenblum to increase support for crime victims in the following areas:

- Child Abuser Multidisciplinary Response Teams – approximately \$2M to make up for cuts that began in 2007.
- Victim Assistance Programs in local prosecutor's offices -- \$2M to assure all victims who report crimes have the support they deserve.
- The Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) -- \$3M to move us closer to meeting minimum emergency services. There is ample justification to increase the ODSVS to at least \$4M. In Portland, I must regularly tell battered women that there are no shelter beds available – and to do the best they can to stay safe with an abuser for just a while longer, or become homeless. The lack of services is truly tragic.
- Restitution Pilot Program – to help us demonstrate a collection system that will eventually be self-sustaining.

This is just a sample of the wise investments we will be able to make if we adopt the concepts of HB 3194. I urge you to do so.

Thank you for your consideration.