



Hearings before the Joint Committee on Public Safety

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Testimony in Support of HB 3194

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We are supporting HB 3194, including the very modest reforms to Measure 11 because we believe this is sound public policy. The additional resources generated for community-based public safety programs will help rebuild some of these services that have been reduced over the last decade, and will create a benevolent cycle of effective intervention, increased reentry success, and less use of criminal justice resources. The results are increased public safety and a reduction of tax-payer dollars spent on incarceration.

Mercy Corps Northwest runs one of three grant funded re-entry resource centers in the state. Reentry Transition Center (RTC) in Portland OR – opened in September 2009 with funding from the United Way by MCNW and 6 other community partner organizations. The RTC

- Received additional funding through a Justice Assistance Byrne Grant, along with Sponsor in Eugene and the Transition Center in Klamath Falls, and administered by the Criminal Justice Commission.
- Originally a 2 year grant: January 2010 through December 2011. We have operated for an additional 18 months at a no cost extension, and met every benchmark and goal set for the project.
- Operates by providing support to individuals leaving county jail, state or federal prison within the last 2 years. Like Klamath Falls, we coordinate the services of 22 partner organizations in the Metro area to help our participants meet the challenges of successfully reentering the community.
- Works in cooperation with Multnomah County DCJ Parole officers, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the US Probation and Parole.
- As of December 2012, the RTC had:
 - Served 2037 people
 - Provided 1108 people with transportation help to look for employment or referral appointments
 - Helped 580 with birth certificates, state ID or licenses necessary for employment
 - Helped 375 find work
 - Provided over 3300 individual check-in with our clients
 - Made 1017 referrals to partner agencies
 - Recruited over 4000 hours of community volunteer help in support of these individuals

Results: 2013 Evaluation by the Criminal Justice Commission found that our 3 transition centers lowered overall re-arrest rates by 31%, and provided at \$14 return in savings for every \$1 invested. Our projects reduced crime, improved public safety and saved public tax payer dollars.

We are in strong support of HB 3194 because the idea of increasing public safety and reducing the costs of corrections through Justice Reinvestment in community-based programs works.

Our 3 Transition Center projects are not the only examples:

- In Multnomah County, Volunteers of America operates the Community Partners Reinvestment Program for young men leaving incarceration. VOA, along with SE Works and Bridges to Change collaborated with DCJ on the Re-Entry Enhancement Coordination Program (REC). Both are evidence-based programs that help people rebuild their lives, create safer communities and save public safety dollars—including the reduced use of prison beds.
- We have 20 other partners, including Central City Concern, Center for Family Success, Phoenix Rising Transitions, all doing similar work.

Consistently supporting these proven, community-based programs and others like them, through Justice Reinvestment funding is smart, cost-effective and good public policy. These projects pay for themselves many times over, both in tax-payer dollars saved, and in lives rebuilt. They offer hope and tangible support to many individuals who want desperately to create new lives, to be good parents, to contribute to their communities after they have paid their dues to society.