



Yamhill County Community Corrections

Trust, Service, & Community Safety

615 E. Sixth Street, McMinnville, Oregon 97128 · Phone: 503-434-7513 · Fax: 503-472-5216

April 3, 2013

Joint Committee on Public Safety
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Co- Chair
Senator Jackie Winters, Co-Chair
Representative Chris Garrett, Co-Chair
Representative Andy Olson, Co-Chair

Re: HB 3194

My name is Ted Smietana. I am the Director of Yamhill County Community Corrections, and a member of the executive team of the Oregon Association of Community Corrections Directors.

Without any changes, our prison system will grown by over 2,300 beds in the next 10 years, costing taxpayers an additional \$600 million dollars on top of a budget that already exceeds a billion dollars. This unsustainable growth will come at a cost to local public safety in counties and to community corrections. HB 3194 can avert the \$600 million additional costs over the next 10 years, and allow for reinvestment to counties and community corrections agencies that are in dire need of more funds.

Oregon takes pride in its local public safety and community corrections system, as we very well should. We have shown great results in reducing recidivism through sanctions, treatment, and services in local counties which cost far less than a prison bed. But we have starved local public safety programs of critical resources in the past few years and this has made it harder for counties to continue to ensure the outcomes we've come to rely upon. Community Corrections budgets were slashed by 20% in the 2011-2013 biennium, resulting in many reductions in services available. For example:

- 70% of counties reported a reduction in staff
- Substance abuse outpatient treatment and mental health services were reduced in ½ of Oregon's counties
- 16 programs reduced capacity by 25% or more and 14 programs were completely eliminated, including a Mental health court in Josephine County and a Reentry transition center in Klamath County
- About 1/3 of counties reduced their jail capacity
- About ½ of counties experienced a reduction in restitution collection

These are only a few of the examples highlighting the reduced capacity to apply the evidence-based practices for which Oregon is well known.

As prisons consume a growing share of the public safety budget, critical crime-fighting resources and local public safety funds are squeezed.

- There is a \$10-1 ratio for prison to community corrections funding

- While the DOC budget has increased, the community correction budget has been cut, forcing the scaling back of programs that work. Due to these budget constraints, many counties are unable to provide treatment in an effective timeframe. We have local alternatives that reduce recidivism and support offender re-entry, providing an effective alternative to expensive prison beds.

One of the recommendations of the Commission on Public Safety was to invest in community corrections including probation and post-prison supervision, as well as local alternatives that reduce recidivism and support offender re-entry. HB 3194 (based on the work of the Commission on Public Safety) allows for this reinvestment. The vital work done by local public safety agencies has been seriously compromised as a result of repeated budget cuts in recent years. Without the changes identified in HB 3194, Oregon's budget cannot accommodate expansion of recidivism reduction programs in community corrections.

HB 3194 would create a performance incentive funding grant for counties. Such a grant program would help counties be better stewards of state funds by allowing us to hold more offenders accountable at the local level. In this proposal, counties that choose to opt in would enter into a partnership with the state to meet a target in their prison bed use. Counties that meet their targets would be able to share in the savings, receiving incentive grant funds to reinvest back into the local public safety infrastructure. As you can see, such a funding program creates a self-sustaining model. Localities with strong local public safety systems are able to rely less on state prison beds, save the state money, and keep Oregonians safe.

Since the new year, a working group of county commissioners, sheriffs, community corrections directors, the governor's office, and others have been meeting regularly to figure out the details of how this program would work.

Of course, this program is contingent upon "reinvestment." The Governor's budget in December did identify at least \$32 million in savings from the sentencing and corrections proposals from the Commission on Public Safety (now codified in HB 3194) and if such savings were realized, we believe that performance incentive grant funding to counties is one sustainable and sensible approach for reinvestment. It will not only help Oregon to continue to hold offenders accountable but it will hold counties accountable for their role in the rising costs of prison and in the most critical role of keeping their local residents safe.

Oregon's Community Corrections Directors support this bill because we believe that it is the right path forward for Oregon. It is a sustainable path. It is a path that is backed by evidence-based practices.

**"Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.
I would be happy to answer any questions."**