



Community And Shelter Assistance Corp.

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TO: Joint Committee on Public Safety
FR: Michael Galhouse, CASA of Oregon
DA: April 5, 2013
RE: Support for HB 3194 Public Safety

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Galhouse and I am a program manager with CASA of Oregon, a nonprofit focused on providing affordable homes and building assets for Oregonians in need. I am here today to testify in support of the Oregon Public Safety Package, HB 3194.

House Bill 3194 is important to CASA of Oregon because we believe the communities we serve and live in should have an effective and efficient public safety system. While we recognize the progress that has been made, we are concerned by cuts in services and escalating costs that will draw scarce resources away from the investments that Oregonians need. We also see opportunities from a more balanced approach which adopts policy innovations that hold offenders accountable while improving services for victims as well as the rehabilitation of people who commit crimes.

The Oregon Commission on Public Safety identified \$600 million in additional corrections costs over the next decade that will result from our current trajectory. This is on top of the present \$1.3 billion cost per biennium, at a time when we are laying off teachers and cutting funds for addiction and mental health treatment. We are also concerned that funding for community corrections and local law enforcement has been decimated during the past decade. By using our tax dollars more effectively, we can prevent crime instead of building more prisons to house another 2300 inmates at the public's expense. HB 3194 is an important step in realigning our priorities.

Over the summer, I had the privilege of touring the Coffee Creek Facility in Wilsonville. While there, I was troubled to learn that classrooms were occasionally being converted to temporary prison cells due to a lack of bed capacity. This interfered with the ability to provide training and instruction to inmates who have a desire to learn. The staff observed that current trends they attributed to Measures 11 and 57 were expected to exacerbate this problem. I urge the committee to move HB 3194 forward so that these modest reforms can improve our public safety system while providing cost savings that all Oregonians will benefit from. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.