



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

March 19, 2015

To: Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee
Senator Chip Shields, Co-Chair
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chair
Members of the Committee
WaysandMeans.PublicSafetySub@state.or.us

Re: SB 5504 - Department of Corrections - Comments

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League has a position on Adult Corrections which strongly favors increased use of alternatives to incarceration where possible. The League also believes that comprehensive transitional programs are essential for successful completion of rehabilitation for each inmate released or paroled from a correctional facility.

The League supported HB 3194 in the last session, even though we were disappointed that the bill did not go further in reducing mandatory sentencing, especially for youth offenders sentenced in the adult system. We appreciate that youth offenders are held at Oregon Youth Authority facilities, but we would recommend a behavioral review prior to transfers to The Department of Corrections facilities. A mechanism for early release for exceptional behavior would reinforce and reward good behavior.

The League has been impressed with the implementation of the Justice Reinvestment Programs in Community Corrections. In order to expand this effort to reduce the prison population, an upfront investment is necessary at the community level. Community Corrections needs resources for supervision, sanctions, and treatment programs for offenders diverted from prison as well as parolees returning from prison.

The League remains concerned about the availability of educational and treatment programs within the prison facilities. We have a captive audience who can benefit from education and treatment while in custody and reenter the community with new skills. We commend the Coffee Creek staff for its parenting programs to improve and rekindle the relationship between mothers and their children. The League supports funding for the parenting program and substance abuse treatment programs within the facilities. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Robin Wisdom in cursive.

Robin Wisdom
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Karen Nibler in cursive.

Karen Nibler
Social Policy Coordinator