

Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee Senator Chip Shields, Co-Chair Representative
Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chair Members of the Committee

Re: SB 5504 - Department of Corrections

My name is Barbara Ross and I live in Portland. I want to talk to you for a few minutes about the importance of the Justice Reinvestment Program. I am thrilled that it is working so well in Multnomah County. The Local Public Safety Coordinating Council has done careful planning with thoughtful input from all partners: The DA staff, defense attorneys, community corrections, probation and parole and judges are all working together to make the program a success.

This year they are slated to save 8.6 million dollars by not sending 243 persons to prison. That is \$96 a day times 365 days times 243 offenders. It adds up to 8,6 million in just one year. That is truly amazing. And this doesn't include savings from the short term transitional leave or reductions in lengths of prison stays.

This is how it works. They do an in depth assessment of each eligible person, considering their individual needs and risk of recidivism. If the risk is too high, they are sent to prison. If the risk of recidivism is quite low, they go into traditional parole. The rest are given an opportunity to participate in the Multnomah county

Justice Reinvestment Program. What services do they need to avoid committing new crimes? A plan is developed that may include housing, mentoring, mental health treatment, drug or alcohol rehabilitation, parenting classes, employment assistance or education. A Judicial settlement conference is held and if all the parties agree, the plan is implemented within a strict accountability structure. If the offender is doing well he receives positive reinforcement, but minor missteps are met with quick, but appropriate sanctions. The magic part is that each individual only gets the services that they need to stay on a positive path and avoid reoffending, The first phase lasts 120 days and then staff takes another look to see what level of supervision is needed and if the service plan needs adjusting.

If we keep to this plan, and if other counties can be as successful as Multnomah County we can avoid building another prison at the cost of \$300 million. Oregon can't afford that. It is essential that we deliver the research based services which will reduce recidivism. If we fail to do that we won't keep our prison population flat and will be faced with the needless and expensive cost of new prison construction.

Thanks you for this opportunity to testify.

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