



April 6, 2015

Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair

Dear Chair Prozanski and Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

We are writing this letter to express Mercy Corps Northwest's support of Senate Bill 363 which limits the imposition of fees to process motions to set aside a record of arrest or conviction.

One of our organization's focuses is supporting people returning to our community from incarceration in county jail, state or federal prison. We see this work as a direct expression of our mission: to help create a more just, productive and secure community. The Reentry Transition Center (RTC) in NE Portland currently welcomes about 1000 people who are returning to the community from incarceration through its doors each year. Many, many of our participants at the RTC are making good faith efforts to construct productive and responsible lives in the community. Successful reintegration of our clients helps to reduce recidivism, decrease the financial burden on the judicial and corrections systems, increase public safety, reduce victimization and helps create healthy families and neighborhoods. We all have a common interest in both their short term and long term success.

Our participants often face multiple and often bewildering array of obstacles in their efforts to reintegrate back into the community. It typically takes years of consistent efforts to stabilize their lives in the face of many challenges. SB 363 would limit the addition of new financial burdens and unnecessary obstacles for people who have worked hard to create a brighter future for themselves and their families—a goal that benefits us all. Additional fees would be counterproductive to the goals of successful reintegration, which is of much greater long-term benefits to the community.

We encourage the members of this committee to vote yes on Senate Bill 363.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Cooper".

Douglas Cooper
Assistant Director, Mercy Corps Northwest