



**CITIZENS UNITED for the
REHABILITATION of ERRANTS**

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Testimony of Oregon CURE

Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee

April 5, 2015

Chair Gesler, Vice Chair Baertschiger, and Members of the Human Resource and Early Childhood Committee,

The board of directors from Oregon CURE is in support of SB 939.

Our mission is to support the incarcerated, their families and friends by advocating for effective criminal justice policies and practices. Our board consists of Gretchen Vala, Hank Schoeffel, Cheryl Ericson, Paul Ericson, LaRae Conley, Patty Katz, Randy Geer and Terry Stein.

We conduct monthly meetings with family members of adults in custody, people re-entering from incarceration and a speaker's panel of formerly incarcerated people. We offer a snapshot of life when folks enter, when they return and barriers people have to overcome as they try to become a successful member of society.

Many of the stories we hear are from family members and the barriers they face for children to visit their loved ones in prison. Often times it is because of the miles a small child might have to travel, frequently the caregiver of the child is unable to commit to the trip because of other children in the household. The gap between the parents and the children grow and soon the children are not able to visit their families.

CURE members would like to see Senate Bill 939 pass because we see it as an avenue for reuniting families and helping with a smooth transition between prison and parenting. Not only are the parents getting the opportunity to learn better coping skills but it helps bridge the increasingly growing gap between parent and child.

We have heard stories from folks that vary; one prison let the parents in the children's playroom and in another prison, there just might be a mat in the corner of the room for all to play on. In yet another prison, there might be a corner with toys and children activities. However, at some facilities, the parent would have to sit at the table while their child brings the toys to the parent. None of these options seems like the ideal situation for bonding between parents and their children.

Senate Bill 939 is a great step in beginning to address the problems of successful re-entry for parents and their children. We urge you to vote yes on this bill.

Our mission is to reduce crime by advocating for effective criminal justice policies and practices.