



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

April 29, 2015

The Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair
House Judiciary Committee

RE: Senate Bill 232

Chair Barker and members of the House Judiciary Committee, I am Jeremiah Stromberg, Assistant Director of the Community Corrections Division for the Oregon Department of Corrections. I am here to testify in support of SB 232 and answer any questions.

What the Bill Does:

SB 232 would establish statutory authority for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) to receive and expend grant funds on re-entry support and services for offenders releasing from the department to supervision in the community.

Background Information:

Individuals releasing from the DOC need appropriate housing and other supports to ensure successful re-entry into the community. While the federal government announces millions of dollars in re-entry grant programs each year, DOC is unable to apply for these grants due to the lack of authority to spend funds on post-release services.

Currently, county community corrections agencies have authority to use grant-in-aid funds for re-entry purposes; however, they can only use those grant-in-aid funds allocated to them based on the funding formula, which must remain within the legislature's baseline appropriation of funds for community corrections operations in the state.

This concept would allow DOC to secure supplemental funding through the receipt of grants in order to dedicate substantially more resources towards re-entry services and supports for releasing inmates. These services and supports include:

- Housing;
- Employment;
- Vocational assistance;
- Transportation;
- Treatment;
- Access to physical and mental health services;
- Medications;
- Mentoring; and
- Specialized supervision strategies.

Additionally, reentry grants typically require program proposals to be based on a continuum of care model that starts with in-prison programming or services and ends with post-release programming and services.

Conclusion:

If passed, this legislation would allow DOC to use Bureau of Justice Assistance and other types of grants for re-entry supports and services, including transition housing for offenders releasing from DOC custody. Oregon has one of the lowest recidivism rates in the country and increasing DOC's ability to enhance transition options for releasing individuals can positively impact recidivism. Less recidivism means fewer victims and fewer costs to society. For the reasons explained above, the department asks this committee to vote SB 232 out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Submitted by:

Oregon Department of Corrections

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