



May 14, 2015

To: Public Safety Subcommittee of Ways and Means

From: Paul Solomon, Executive Director, Sponsors, Inc.

Co-Chairs Williamson and Shields and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Solomon and I am the Executive Director at Sponsors, Inc. in Eugene, OR. I am here today to with my esteemed colleagues to urge you to fully fund Justice Reinvestment at \$53 million in the coming biennium.

For the past 41 years Sponsors has been providing Reentry Services in Lane County. We currently operate 12 buildings on 5 sites with 145 beds of transitional housing for people with criminal histories. We provide a variety of on-site programs built around our transitional housing for men and women, including: a Mentoring Program; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; a "One Stop" Reentry Resource Center; a Veteran's Program; an Education Program; Drug and Alcohol treatment; services for sex offenders; a Legal clinic and a new facility for women and children.

As a reentry service provider and the vice chair of our LPSCC, I have seen firsthand the difference these new Justice Reinvestment programs are making in the lives of our clients and the health of our community. In Lane County we have used our funding to pay for transitional housing, mental health services, A&D treatment, educational services, and other interventions, creating new jobs and changing lives. As a result, we are able to serve the burgeoning influx of men and women releasing on Short Term Transitional Leave to Lane County, helping the state to reduce its prison population and forestall the need to add beds in Madras and Junction City. These savings are real and if we are to continue our efforts we sincerely hope that you will provide us with the resources necessary to reduce our reliance on prison beds.

I also serve on the 3194 Regional Implementation Committee for the Metro counties. We have been analyzing the data from the CJC on a quarterly basis and strategizing with our LSPCC members. As a result, Lane County has seen a marked reduction in our use of prison beds and the length stay for certain property crimes. In the last reporting period, we have gone from being up by 58 new intakes (this year vs. last year) to being down by 3 intakes for new convictions. Furthermore, we have reduced the average length of stay for ID theft from 47 months to 28 months. These efforts would not have occurred without 3194 and the Justice Reinvestment Program. Lane County's public safety system is in a precarious position, facing reductions in our Grant in Aid funding and declining federal timber subsidies. Justice Reinvestment is providing a public safety lifeline allowing us to make a difference on the front end and the back end.

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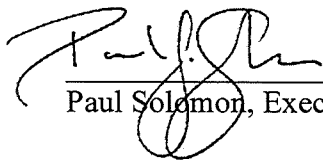
*Prisoner Reentry Services Since 1973*



However, without the projected increases, based on the \$53 million number, we will most likely be facing cuts in our community corrections funded programs. If this happens, we will likely regress, program will decline and we will once again, begin sending more people to prison, ultimately costing the state and taxpayers.

We have a unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the 4,500 people leaving prison this year and thousands more who will cycle in and out of our local jails. We can do what we've been doing in past years and watch us open the next prison. Or we can embrace the tenets of Justice Reinvestment and utilize the savings to invest in evidence based strategies at the local level that have been shown to reduce recidivism and our dependence on prison beds.

Sincerely,



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Paul Solomon, Executive Director