

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"
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Testimony in Support of HB 4123
February 3, 2016, Hearing Room 343, 3 pm
House Committee on Judiciary

Chair Barker, Vice Chairs Lininger and Olson and Representatives
Barton, Greenlick, Krieger, Post, Sprenger, and Vega Pederson:

The Oregon Commission for Black Affairs is testifying in support of the
proposed language in the court fees bill.

Oregonians who have served their time in Oregon state prisons need relief
from court fees. House Bill 4123 will reduce the financial burden of
formerly incarcerated people and people on parole. Formerly incarcerated
Oregonians, particularly African-Americans and people of color, struggle
to reintegrate into society. This bill addresses viable alternatives that will
satisfy court fees while providing a new path way for formerly
incarcerated Oregonians to reintegration into society through community
service options.

We must be innovative in the way we as a society interact with formerly
incarcerated Oregonians and remember that they are still citizens. They
are a growing number of individuals who we need to become successful
contributors to society. The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) understands there
are many challenges for formerly incarcerated Oregonians to reintegrate back into society and
we believe that extreme poverty made worse by fees incurred while incarcerated is a set up for
failure, when success is so desperately needed. HB 4123 will give reintegrating Oregon citizens
an opportunity to repay their fees with community service. To do that, the bill makes a
significant change to the way social services and community based organizations interact with
this population. It establishes agency collaboration with the community court system to give
formerly incarcerated Oregonians the opportunity to relieve their existing court fee debt using an
already proven model of community service.

OCBA believes that second chances are for everyone and this includes formerly incarcerated
Oregonians. HB 4123 will give formerly them a chance to eliminate their court fee debt through
community service as they reintegrate back into society and begin a new and productive life.

The Oregon Commission on Black affairs urges your positive consideration of HB 4123.

Sincerely,

James I. Manning, Chair

OR Commission on Black Affairs

Chair:

James I Manning, Jr.

Vice Chair:

James Morris

Commissioners:

Robin Morris Collin

Kayse Jama

Musse Olol

Gwendolyn Trice

Legislative Liaisons:

Sen. Rod Monroe

Rep. Lew Frederick