



ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS DIRECTORS

HB 2355:

General Statement of Support for Re-classing Felony PCS to Misdemeanor

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House Judiciary Chairman Representative Jeff Barker, members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly's House Committee on Judiciary, my name is Steve Berger and I am the Director of Washington County Community Corrections. I am here today to speak on behalf of the Oregon Association of Community Corrections Directors (OACCD). Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today.

The OACCD wishes to voice general support of the reclassification proposal reducing the felony crime classification of possession of controlled substance (PCS) to a misdemeanor crime within HB 2355. While there is still work to be done within the details of defining "personal use amount" and the number of prior convictions associated with the new felony level, the intent of the reclassification will mitigate unintended consequences associated with a simple felony PCS conviction such as employment, housing, education, parenting and volunteer opportunities.

A crucial component of the PCS reclassification is maintaining the necessary supervision and services to ensure those with substance abuse addictions have a path to recovery. Community Corrections currently provides case management, need and risk assessments, community supervision, cognitive interventions, and access to treatment. Without an evidenced based intervention directly linked to formal supervision, those convicted of PCS have a higher chance of continued drug use that would have an impact on crime rates, victims, families, community safety, and community health.

However, Community Corrections services are funded through a formula based upon felony convictions. To ensure these services continue and that the misdemeanor classification does not restrict supervision, services, and programs currently available, legislation and ORS will need to be amended to include funding for misdemeanor PCS.

Today I am requesting this bill continue to move forward with the acknowledgment there are some details remaining to be worked through, and emphasize that OACCD support for HB 2355 is contingent upon continued funding for the supervision and services associated with PCS crimes.

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