



March 31, 2017

Senate Judiciary Committee

Chair Senator Floyd Prozanski Sen.FloydProzanski@OregonLegislature.gov

Senator Kim Thatcher Sen.KimThatcher@state.or.us

Senator Michael Dembrow Sen.MichaelDembrow@state.or.us

Senator Dennis Linthicum sen.DennisLinthicum@oregonlegislature.gov

Senator James Manning Jr. sen.jamesmanning@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: In support of SB 692 (Hearing 3.14.17)

Dear Chair Prozanski, Committee Members:

I know that you know this, but it bears repeating, "Incarceration carries significant and enduring economic repercussions for the remainder of the person's working years," according to the study. "Virtually all inmates will be released, and when they are, **society has a strong interest in helping them fulfill their responsibilities** to their victims, their families and their communities. When returning offenders can find and keep legitimate employment, they are more likely to be able to pay restitution to their victims, support their children and avoid crime."¹

My name is Anne O'Malley. I am an attorney specializing in nonprofit law. For almost 10 years I worked with Mercy Corps NW to create the Reentry Transition Center and the ROAR Alliance. I am well-versed in reentry law, policy, and practice. In fact, assisting people PRIOR to incarceration was an idea I found buried in a housing article by Fannie Mae. I brought the idea to Alex Bassos and his team. They immediately saw the sense of it and have created a brilliant, low cost program that will help people to pick up their lives after incarceration with much less difficulty: difficulties that are unnecessary at best and represent the Collateral Consequences of having made a mistake, albeit sometimes a very serious mistake.

What we as a society want, is that a person does their time, learns their lesson, becomes rehabilitated, and returns to a life worth making better. What we have created is a system in which one's period of incarceration starts in motion a series of collateral consequences that can and often do almost ensure an inability to return to normal life.

Tim drank too much. He went to prison after being convicted of involuntary manslaughter/vehicular homicide. He was a model prisoner, was deeply sorry, joined AA, and looked forward to starting again; doing better.

¹ "Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility," 2010, Pew Economic Policy Group,

What happened while Tim served his time:

His former girlfriend cleaned out his bank accounts.

His Netflix, T-Mobile, and electric service accounts were all defaulted, closed, and sent to collections where the fees and interest rates on past due balances began to accumulate.

His child support payments continued to mount up, go unpaid, and eventually resulted in new charges, garnishment attempts, and societal derision.

A forgotten and unpaid parking ticket doubled every month until it was insurmountable.

His landlord filed an eviction for failure to pay rent, all his property was stored, and then unclaimed, was given away.

All his important documents, birth certificate, medical documents, and titles were lost.

When released, Tim

Had an eviction on his record which kept him out of the rental market.

Had almost irredeemably bad credit.

Could not get a driver's license due to the fines owed for the parking ticket.

Owed more money than he could ever hope to repay.

Faced an outstanding warrant based on failure to pay child support.

Had no belongings but the clothes he wore.

Had no valid identification.

Had become homeless.

Had no income.

The Pre-entry pilot will be able to ameliorate and in some cases eliminate many of the collateral consequences of having been incarcerated.

Having gone through the pilot program before sentencing, Tim

Settled with his landlord,

Closed his bank and credit card accounts,

Renewed his driver's license,

Stored his important papers and documents,

Paid the parking ticket,

Had his child support obligation suspended,

Stored his belongings securely with family,

Got a forbearance on his student loan,

Prepared for the long road back.

Tim still contends with being a felon, being unable to enter many professions, and in some places is no longer able to vote. He will still have to face the complications of reentry, including poverty, stigma, and difficulty getting housing or employment – but from a much better position making it more likely that he will succeed in re-creating a life, taking back up the mantle of a law abiding, tax paying, financially supportive parenting, and Oregonian.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and the thousands of Oregonians it stands to help in their darkest hours.

Anne E. O'Malley, J.D., MPH, LL.M

omalley@strategiesandaffairs.com

503 317 0403