



ROD UNDERHILL, District Attorney for Multnomah County

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March 14, 2017

Re: Senate Bill 692

Dear Chairman Prozanski and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jeffrey Howes. I am the First Assistant to District Attorney Rod Underhill in Multnomah County. I have served as a Deputy District Attorney for 22 years. In that capacity, I have handled more than 2000 criminal cases, many of which resulted in the criminal defendant being sentenced to lengthy prison sentences. I have worked with/against some of the finest criminal defense attorneys in the State of Oregon. To a person, they have cared deeply about the current and future well-being of their clients.

I write in support of Senate Bill 692. This bill will create a pilot program designed to assist criminal defendants with the often arduous process of readying themselves and their personal, familial, and financial affairs for the time they will serve in custody. I know that currently defense attorneys will take on these tasks outside of the already burdensome duties of criminal litigation.

Criminal defense offices are uniquely positioned to undertake this work. Over the course of the representation, defense attorneys work to build a relationship based upon confidence and trust. Often, over the life of a serious criminal case, the members of the criminal defense team are the only people associated with the criminal justice system upon whom the defendant feels he or she can rely.

It is axiomatic to say that a person whose affairs are in order at the beginning of a prison sentence will be less likely to reoffend when released from custody. I firmly believe that the data collected over the course of this pilot project will bear this out.

Thank you very much.

Regards,

First Assistant to the District Attorney
Multnomah County, Oregon