

March 12, 2017

Dear Chair Prozanski:

I am writing to you to support SB 692. My organization works to fight poverty and the majority of people incarcerated also experience poverty. America's recidivism rates are unacceptably high and linked to lack of support and financial burdens that incur while they are incarcerated. Many people are released only to find that their credit is ruined and they owe thousands of dollars in fees and or interests. This bill provides real opportunities for people to get out of prison and have an authentic chance to rebuild their lives.

I am the only family member who has not been incarcerated and I know first hand the added weight of financial burdens added on while people are incarcerated. It is defeating as people struggle with thousands of dollars in late fees, interest, fines and obstacles that often lead to re-incarceration.

This pilot offers an opportunity for families to access a legal structure that puts financial obligations and benefits on hold to avoid a bad credit history or accruing unnecessary additional debt. It provides navigating investing upfront will save money in the long run and reduce the numbers of people in cages in our country.

The majority of people incarcerated in Oregon will return to the community at some point. Having them read a book on what to do is clearly not enough. People being released often can't read at a third grade level. This project offers the support needed to remove financial and other obstacles that often prevent people from successfully returning to their communities.

Hoping for a positive vote,

Dr. Donna M. Beegle

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