



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 23, 2017

To: Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee
Senator Jackie Winters, Co-Chair
Representative Duane Stark, Co-Chair

Re: **HB 5004** – Department of Corrections - **Support**

The League has a position on Adult Corrections that strongly favors increased use of alternatives to incarceration where possible. The Family Alternative Sentencing Program is one example that can be beneficial for the offender and his/her children. The League commends the DOC for its family events and family visits by phone or Skype to maintain the family relationships.

The League also believes that comprehensive transitional programs are essential for successful completion of rehabilitation for each inmate released or paroled from a correctional facility. The League has supported earned time and transitional leave programs to incentivize prisoners to comply with institutional programs in order to gain early release. It also saves the cost of prison time.

The Justice Reinvestment Program has the promise of community supervision and treatment for offenders, while preventing a growing prison population. The League encourages the continued investment in community corrections in order to save costs in the long run. Many of these offenders have mental health or substance abuse disorders, which can be treated in the community and hopefully prevent further criminal activity. Drug courts and mandatory treatment programs don't have a 100% success rate, but each offender that is diverted saves the system money.

The League appreciates the educational and vocational programs offered to prisoners to provide constructive activity while incarcerated, as well as job training for future employment. The options for mental health treatment in facilities are a concern. Could the Junction City Hospital be an option for treatment for seriously mentally ill inmates, while also easing the population at Coffee Creek or other institutions? It might be a safer environment for seriously mentally ill persons and has an experienced professional staff. Is there a mechanism to allow for transfer between DOC and OSH?

Lastly, the League would like to commend the DOC leaders for the staff wellness initiatives. Just knowing that the directors are concerned about correctional staff mental and physical wellness helps the staff feel valued. The positive vibe should permeate the buildings and programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Norman Turrill
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LWVOR Social Policy Coordinator