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March 27, 2017

The Honorable Senator Floyd Prozanski
Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
900 Court St. N.E., S-413
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Senator Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I write today to express my full support for SB844. SB844 helps accomplish three primary goals related to adult DOC custody inmates and their court ordered financial obligations: accountability, safety and security, and successful transition and re-entry back in to the community. I was a member of the Inmate Financial Accountability Workgroup and represented the Oregon District Attorneys Association as well as the interests of my office.

Article I, Section 42 of Oregon's Constitution grants victims of crime the right to "receive prompt restitution from the convicted criminal who caused the victim's injury or loss." This constitutional right, at times, can come in to conflict with other Oregon laws and/or policies. SB844 takes a huge practical and philosophical step forward on behalf of crime victims here in Oregon. Much to the credit of the Oregon Department of Corrections Director Colette Peters, she and her staff brought all of the stakeholders to the table during a series of meetings spanning nearly a year to come to a reasonable, workable solution. SB844 codifies the results of that group's work. After appropriately setting aside money to be used by the inmate to assist with re-entry upon release, the bill authorizes the Department of Corrections to collect up to 15% of the money held in an inmate's account and to disperse the money to victims, child support obligees, the courts (for fines and fees), and to those holding civil judgments against the inmate. Care was taken to ensure that money will also remain in the inmate's account for his or her personal use (commissary, communications, etc.) while in DOC custody. I further recognize, and support, the notion that funding will be required to make changes to the Oregon DOC's accounting system in order to update software and accommodate system enhancements which will allow for implementation of the workgroup's recommendations.

As I stated above, I am very much in support of SB844. I respectfully urge this committee to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rod Underhill".

ROD UNDERHILL
Multnomah County District Attorney