

April 12, 2017

The Honorable Chair Barker  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Women's Health and Wellness Alliance, a group of legislators, health care personnel, state and local agency staff and citizen advocates dedicated to promoting the health, safety and economic well-being of women, supports HB 3078.

HB 3078, also known as the Safety and Savings Act, realigns drug and property crime laws to avoid incarcerating more women in Oregon, and re-directs funding towards supervision, mental health and addiction services. Effectively, the bill will reduce recidivism and re-entry rates in our prison system. Oregon's stringent sentencing laws for drug and property crimes disproportionately affect women. In 2015, seventy percent of women in prison were incarcerated for drug and property crimes. From 2007 to 2015, the number of incarcerated women increased by twenty-two percent. Many of these women are mothers. These exaggerated sentences are not only impacting women but have devastating impacts of the lives of their children and families as well.

HB 3078 will decrease sentencing of drug and property crimes that have such devastating impacts on our most vulnerable populations. The savings generated can then be used to increase programs that work to decrease recidivism and keep families together. These programs include victim services, addiction and mental health treatment, justice reinvestment programs, and family sentencing alternatives.

HB 3078 will positively impact the lives of women and families by giving them the wrap-around services they need to thrive. Keeping families together has shown to greatly decrease the intergenerational cycle of incarceration and poverty, providing a brighter future for Oregon's children. We encourage your support for HB 3078.

Sincerely,

The OWHWA Co-Chairs:



Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward



Representative Karin Power



Senator Kathleen Taylor



Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer

