



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

May 10, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

RE: Senate Bill 241A

Chair Barker and members of the House Judiciary Committee, for the record, I am Elizabeth Craig, Communications Administrator for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to share information related to SB 241A, and answer any questions.

What the Bill Does:

SB 241A establishes the Bill of Rights for children of incarcerated parents and directs DOC to assign implementation of the Bill of Rights to an existing public body.

Background Information:

In 2001, the Oregon Legislature approved Senate Bill 133, putting into law the Children of Incarcerated Parents Project workgroup. DOC played a significant role in the workgroup and implemented many of its recommendations, including family-oriented visiting spaces, the use of technology to enhance connectivity, and the establishment of Parenting Inside Out classes. Since that time, the Governor's Reentry Council was established in 2007. In 2014, the council convened seven implementation teams, including the Family and Community Connections & Engagement Team that DOC Assistant Director Heidi Steward co-chairs along with a colleague from the Department of Human Services.

In light of conversations with the Governor's Reentry Council and other stakeholders, we agreed to amendments to clarify what implementing the Bill of Rights means. DOC and the Governor's Reentry Council are committed to working on these issues within the council's existing structure. These issues will be assigned to the council's Family and Community Engagement Implementation Team.

While we may not be able to remove the obstacles and traumas faced by children of incarcerated parents, we can help to create a system that recognizes their needs and prioritizes their rights. The Bill of Rights will serve as a set of guiding principles for the work of the council as they determine policies and practices that ensure the needs and best interests of children of incarcerated parents are taken into consideration. Some of the deliverables may include policy and funding recommendations to partners, agencies, stakeholders, and the legislature.

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The department appreciates stakeholders working with us on this important issue and is pleased this important work continues within the legislature and the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Submitted by:

Oregon Department of Corrections

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