



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

May 11, 2017

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: House Bill 3449

Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am Elizabeth Craig, Communications Administrator for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to testify in support of HB 3449.

What the Bill Does:

House Bill 3449 extends the sunset that allows DOC to house inmates in public correctional facilities outside Oregon; the current statute sunsets January 2, 2018. This bill also expressly prohibits DOC from housing inmates in private correctional facilities outside of Oregon.

Background Information:

HB 3449 gives DOC flexibility in managing the inmate population if and when the department needs alternatives to housing them in existing DOC institutions. This legislation would work as a safety valve in the occurrence of a natural disaster or some other unforeseen event that dramatically decreases the number of beds available to house adults in DOC facilities. HB 3449 would allow DOC to house adults in out-of-state public facilities in such an emergency.

Regardless of whether HB 3449 is enacted as law, DOC would retain its current statutory authority to transfer inmates between states under the Interstate Corrections Compact. While the Compact program is an essential tool for maintaining the safety and security of our institutions, it is based on an exchange system and, therefore, would not be an effective tool in certain scenarios, such as that described above.

In addition, DOC has made a policy decision to not house adults in private correctional facilities outside of Oregon; therefore, we support codifying this practice in law.

Issues Addressed by the Bill:

This bill ensures DOC's current ability to contract with public entities in other states would remain intact and expressly prohibits the department from housing inmates in private prisons outside Oregon.

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For the reasons stated above, DOC supports HB 3449, and encourages the committee to vote HB 3449 out of committee with a do pass recommendation.

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

Submitted by:

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