



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Department of Corrections

Office of the Director
2575 Center Street NE
Salem, OR 97301-4667
Voice: 503-945-0927
Fax: 503-373-1173



May 10, 2017

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

Subject: SB 682A Letter of Support

Dear Chair Barker and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) to let you know that we fully support SB 682A.

SB 682A establishes a process to suspend child support obligations owed by persons incarcerated for 180 consecutive days or longer under a refutable presumption of an inability to pay. In addition, rather than reinstating 100 percent of the support amount on the 61st day following release, the bill provides that the previously ordered support amount reinstates at 50 percent on the 121st day after the person's release from incarceration.

Under current law, persons sentenced to a term of incarceration with DOC have the opportunity to apply for a modification of their child support order through the Oregon Child Support Program. In so doing, they may qualify for a reduction, or even elimination, of the child support order during the time they are incarcerated. However, the time period for requesting a modification under current law is limited, and many adults in custody do not make timely requests.

SB 682A provides that incarceration, for an obligated parent, is a qualifying "change in circumstances" as it pertains to their ability to pay and, therefore, their child support obligation will not accrue during incarceration. In addition, the bill changes both the reinstatement percentage and timeline – reinstating the previously-ordered support amount at 50 percent (versus in full) and on the 121st day after release (versus the 61st day post-release). In so doing, individuals who have completed a term of incarceration are more likely to have community-based supports and services in place to help stabilize them in the community and to have sufficient time to prepare to be in a position to meet their child support obligation. And, the Oregon Child Support Program will have time to review their support calculation to ensure it reflects their current earning capacity.

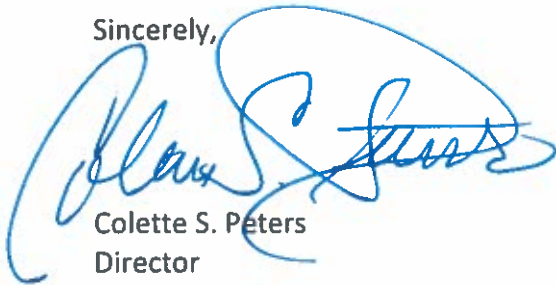
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The department wishes to thank the Department of Justice's Division of Child Support, Child Support Program; the Marion County District Attorney's Office's Child Support Program; Marion County Commissioner Janet Carlson; and others who invited DOC to the table ahead of this 2017 legislation to give voice to the concerns of individuals leaving incarceration with accrued child support debt. SB 682A is pivotal legislation toward the effective reintegration of parents from incarceration to the community and will help strengthen Oregon families into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Colette S. Peters", is written over a large, light blue circular scribble.

Colette S. Peters
Director

CC: Heidi Steward, Assistant Director, Offender Management & Rehabilitation