

Kate Brown
Governor



Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"
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Testimony in Support of SB 360
June 5th, 2017, Hearing Room 170, 3 pm
Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety

Co-Chairs Senator Winters and Representative Stark, Sen. Frederick, Sen. Steiner Hayward, Rep. Barker, Rep. Huffman, Rep Piluso, and Rep Sanchez:

The Oregon Commission for Black Affairs supports the proposed language in the court fees bill as an important part of successful transition to community.

Oregonians who have served their time in Oregon state prisons need relief from court and related fees. Senate Bill 360 will reduce the financial burden of formerly incarcerated people and people on parole, providing a viable alternative that will satisfy court fees while providing a new path way into society through community service options. Formerly incarcerated Oregonians, particularly African-Americans and people of color, struggle to reintegrate into society.

We must be innovative in the way we as a society interact with formerly incarcerated Oregonians remembering our commitment to them as valued citizens, parents and family members as they re-enter their communities. Oregon has a growing number of such individuals who we need to become successful contributors to society. The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) understands there are many challenges for formerly incarcerated Oregonians to reintegrate back into society and we believes that extreme poverty made worse by fees incurred while incarcerated is a set up for failure, when success is so desperately needed. SB 360 will give reintegrating Oregon citizens an opportunity to repay their fees with community service. To do that, the bill makes a significant change to the way social services and community based organizations interact with formerly incarcerated people. It establishes agency collaboration with the community court system to give formerly incarcerated Oregonians the opportunity to relieve their existing fee debt using an already proven model.

OCBA believes that second chances are for everyone. SB 360 gives formerly incarcerated Oregonians a chance to eliminate their court fee debt through community service as they reintegrate back into society and begin a new and productive life.

The Oregon Commission on Black affairs thanks you for your positive consideration of SB 360.

Sincerely,

Chair of OCBA, James Morris

OR Commission on Black Affairs

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