



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

June 7, 2017

The Honorable Jackie Winters, Co-Chair
The Honorable Duane Stark, Co-Chair
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

RE: Senate Bill 844

Co-Chair Winters, Co-Chair Stark, and members of the 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 844.

Background Information:

Senate Bill 844 is the result of the Inmate Financial Accountability Workgroup, whose membership included representatives from DOC, our labor partners, AOCE and AFSCME, the Oregon District Attorneys Association, crime victim advocates, community corrections, OCDLA, the Judicial Department and DOJ.

The workgroup met throughout 2016 to better understand the mechanics of inmate moneys, how DOC inmate accounting system works, and to develop recommendations for how DOC could collect a portion of inmates moneys to go toward court ordered financial obligations.

Senate Bill 844 reflects the recommendations of the workgroup. It will allow DOC to collect a portion of inmate moneys for two reasons:

- 1) To go towards paying off court-ordered financial obligations, such as victims' restitution and court fines and fees.
- 2) To establish a re-entry savings account for each adult in custody.

These two elements place an emphasis on accountability and transition – both of which are critical to DOC's mission. Part of holding offenders accountable is helping them take responsibility for their actions – and paying financial obligations is part of that responsibility. And, the less debt someone owes upon release, the easier transition into the community will be. In addition, because the first 90 days post-prison are critical to an individual's success, the re-entry savings account will lessen the burden of some of the costs for critical supports, such as transportation, food, and clothing.

Again, Senate Bill 844 is the result of collaboration among many public safety stakeholders. It is important for both accountability and transition.

SB 844 Testimony
June 7, 2017
Page 2

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

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