



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
SAFETY & JUSTICE**

**Submitted to the House Judiciary Committee
Thursday, March 14, 2019**

**Testimony in Support of HB 3064
By Shannon Wight, Deputy Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice**

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and members of the committee,

At Partnership for Safety and Justice, we advocate for public safety and criminal justice policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both.

HB 3064, the Justice Reinvestment Accountability and Equity Act, is a needed update to Justice Reinvestment. Passed in 2013, Justice Reinvestment has prevented the need to build a new prison and invested in counties to create their own local crime solutions. One of its foundational premises is that by averting prison costs, the state has resources to send to counties where we know accountability is often more effective and less costly.

PSJ has been a key supporter of Justice Reinvestment, hosting legislative briefings and coordinating a United for Justice lobby day where we bring together law enforcement, communities allies, business, labor, and others to meet with legislators to support Justice Reinvestment funding. We will do that again this session and are deeply committed to its ongoing success and to the connections that are deepened by this partnership.

At Partnership for Safety and Justice, one of our driving beliefs is that we incarcerate too many people and need to invest in effective alternatives, which is exactly what Justice Reinvestment does. We also believe in tracking policy and program implementation and in doing what we can to ensure the best outcomes.

That's why we've spent the last several months in conversation with the Criminal Justice Commission, stakeholders, and others to identify the right ways to bring needed updates to the program. We believe that these changes will help Oregon get the best return on Justice Reinvestment.

There are two areas that the bill targets for improvement: first, is accountability to reduce our reliance on prison; second is to work for more equitable outcomes for historically underserved communities.

The goals of the changes made in the bill with regard to accountability are to provide greater legislative directive to key county decision-makers that they must work to reduce their reliance on prison beds. At the same time, the bill still leaves enough room for the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) to determine a county's good-faith efforts to achieve these outcomes based on a variety of factors that can impact a county's outcomes.

HB 3064 does this by:

- Adding a judge to the Grant Review Committee, as the judiciary plays a key role in successful outcomes.
- Requiring relevant stakeholders to sign on to the grant application.
- Putting into statute that the CJC shall specifically assess prison utilization.
- Empowering the Grant Review Committee as ultimate decider of what happens with regard to funding to each county and directs the grant review committee to consider prison utilization.
- Specifying what is already a practice: that the CJC can provide technical assistance, provide provisional funding, or deny funding.

The equitable outcomes we seek with HB 3064 are to better understand and meet the needs of historically underserved communities including communities of color, rural communities, the Tribes, and LGBTQ people. Right now we have very little reliable data or analysis in the public safety system on these populations, so HB 3064 creates an equity advisory committee to Criminal Justice Commission to study these issues and produce a report by September 15, 2020.

Additionally, the bill:

- Adds two members from historically underserved communities to the Grant Review Committee.
- Provides guidance that any withheld funds can be given out through another round of granting with preference given to historically underserved communities.
- Adds that when appointments are made to the Commission, consideration will be given to race, ethnicity, and gender in addition to geography which is already in statute.
- Adds that the Criminal Justice Commission shall study racial and ethnic disparity in correctional populations

The -1 amendments before you are based off of feedback from the Criminal Justice Commission and Community Corrections. For the CJC, they streamline reporting, and for Community Corrections they ease requirements in the grant application process.

We believe HB 3064 with the -1 amendments will help Justice Reinvestment reach its full potential and ensure that historically underserved communities receive its benefits.