

Kristy Laschober
Ashland, OR 97520
kristylaschoberspeaks@gmail.com

Oregon House
SB 713 Written Testimony

May 11, 2021

Thank you Chair Alonso Leon and members of the House Education Committee.

My name is Kristy Laschober and I live in Ashland, OR. I am asking for your YES vote on SB 713 and SB 234.

Everyone knows that education is important for the future of our state of Oregon and to leverage individual earning potential. It is especially important, though to people who have been addicted, experienced immense trauma, poverty and neglect. Our jails and prisons are filled with such people. I know this because I was addicted to opioids and as a first time offender, I was sentenced to 5 years in federal prison.

The judge strongly urged me to enroll in college when I was released 4 years ago and it was the best decision I was lovingly pushed into. I can say without a doubt that college saved my life.

I built close relationships with my peers and professors. Classroom discussions provided the opportunity for me to be vulnerable and share a part of my story in a safe environment and I was pushed out of my comfort zone which allowed me to be slightly impressed by what I could accomplish. I got 100% on my first math test and I was shocked. I couldn't help but wonder "What else can I achieve"?

While working full time I graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelors of Science in Innovation and Leadership from Southern Oregon University. My higher education experience continues to yield numerous benefits and healthy relationships. I wouldn't even know it was possible to have a voice the way I do now, if it wasn't for my professor who assigned Twitter for homework, BUT that's another story.

Currently, I am a Community Resource Director for Reclaiming Lives, a non-profit in Medford Oregon and the barriers that people who have criminal histories face are unbelievable. We hear about them all the time but today YOU have the opportunity to remove one of them. There should be no barriers for an education if we truly want to live and work in an inclusive and equitable state. This begins for those who now have access to higher education inside prison. Finding ways to best serve adults in and out of custody will set them on a brand new trajectory that can only benefit the state of Oregon.

For these reasons I strongly urge that you support and pass SB 713 and SB 234, extremely important bills. Thank you.