

Support for SB 620  
House Rules Committee  
Submitted by Paul Solomon, Executive Director  
June 18, 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Drazen and Holvey, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Solomon and I am the Executive Director at Sponsors, Inc, based in Eugene. I am also the Chair of Lane County's Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC); and serve on the Governor's Racial Justice Council, in addition to many other boards related to public safety.

I am writing today to urge your support for SB 620 with the -2 amendments. As amended, this bill would abolish fees levied against people who are not in prison or jail, but who are still under the supervision of community corrections.

Sponsors, Inc., is a national leader in the delivery of re-entry services for individuals returning from prison. We see every day the ways in which supervision fees pose significant barriers to individuals who have served the sentences imposed by the courts and are attempting to rebuild their lives post-incarceration. The vast majority of the clients who seek our services release homeless and indigent. They face discrimination and stigma as they seek employment, and most of the jobs available to them pay little more than minimum wage. They struggle to scrape together adequate income to afford skyrocketing rents and to cover their basic needs (medication, transportation, food, clothing) upon their transition from Sponsors. Supervision fees compound this very real struggle, very often holding people who have served their sentences in a perpetual state of poverty.

People who have been convicted should be held accountable. And, after they have served the sentence imposed by the court, we should be doing what we can to support their successful reintegration in the community. Supervision fees actively inhibit successful reintegration. They hold people back, furthering the risk that they will be funneled once again into the cycle of homelessness and incarceration.

Correctional supervision itself can be a helpful tool in supporting successful reintegration. If parole officers can shift their attention away from the tedious and oppositional work of collecting supervision fees, they will be better positioned to actively support their clients in adhering to the terms of their supervision. They will be able to focus on the critical work that for which their roles were intended.

We urge your support for this small but meaningful change. Please pass SB 620 with the -2 amendments. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,  
Paul Solomon