

Testimony in favor of HB 2002\_from Justice Study Group, Multnomah County Dem Party

Sentencing prison time by category of crime without regard to other factors, is unjust, ineffective, and expensive. In the past few decades thinking has evolved about underlying causes of criminal behavior, mental illness, substance dependence, brain development, results of trauma, and the disproportionate criminalizing of poor people and people of color. We know now that best results in rehabilitation are not achieved by mandatory minimum sentencing without consideration of each individual's situation. Arbitrary long sentences and mass incarceration don't produce good results.

The people of Oregon approve the election of judges, and should respect their ability to use Sentencing Guidelines in deciding individually appropriate sentences, either higher or lower.

It doesn't take any special knowledge to understand that allowing time off of both prison sentences and post-prison programs for "good behavior" would be beneficial for the Department of Corrections as well as for prisoners who want to earn it.

HB 2002 calls for all these reforms, which conform to today's knowledge of best practices. In addition, the bill calls for the transfer of state funding to programs for disadvantaged communities, mental health and drug treatment, and victim services. It helps released prisoners with their reintegration into society by not saddling them with fees, fines and requirements that prevent their success. All this would contribute to smart crime prevention and also reduce disproportionate effects on poor people and people of color.

Judiciary Committee should pass HB 2002 and send it on for passage by the whole Legislature.