



Oregon Crime Victims Law Center

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Support for HB 4075
Facilitating Access to Restitution for Crime Victims
February 1, 2022
House Committee on Judiciary

The Oregon Crime Victims Law Center is a nonprofit organization that provides free legal representation to crime victims throughout Oregon. OCVLC attorneys and advocates assist victims with asserting and seeking enforcement of their constitutional and statutory rights in the criminal justice system. One of those fundamental rights is the right to restitution. Restitution is a critical component of the justice system, providing accountability for offenders and compensation for victims' losses. It is an attempt to make a victim "whole" after the losses incurred as a result of a criminal act. We know that victims who are traumatized by crime may never be "whole," but their financial losses should be mitigated as much as possible. For a crime victim, knowing that an offender has been held accountable can significantly help contribute to their recovery.

HB 4075 would improve victim access to restitution. The bill establishes a straightforward process for restitution, giving victims a better understanding of what to expect, and it clarifies the timelines for establishing restitution. Perhaps most importantly, HB 4075 provides that a bill, estimate, or invoice is presumed reasonable in establishing a victim's losses. This provision removes the current obstacles victims face in attempting to be compensated for their losses. The offender still has the opportunity to object to restitution and request a hearing. But making the process easier for the person who has suffered the harm seems reasonable.

Sections Six and Seven of the bill would elevate restitution payments to a Level One obligation, so that crime victims get priority distribution from payments made by offenders. This provision ensures that those most harmed by the offense will be reimbursed for their losses more quickly, which is critically important to many victims.

For some victims, the financial impact of crime is devastating. The justice system should do everything possible to ensure that victims are compensated for their losses, and the provisions of HB 4075 will improve victims' access to restitution. Passage of HB 4075 would improve the justice system's response to victims of crime, and OCVLC urges your support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rosemary W. Brewer
Executive Director