



This testimony is on behalf of Justice Advocates, a grassroots criminal justice reform organization in the Portland area.

Almost all individuals incarcerated in Oregon will sooner or later return to our communities. When they do, we hope they will succeed in society, not only for their sake, but also because that success provides community safety. Successful people will be unlikely to do things that could result in their returning to prison.

For people returning from prison to be successful, one of the four biggest challenges is finding employment, especially a living-wage job. Some jobs require a professional license. We want returning prisoners to be able to get that license, or retain a license they previously had, by not being denied it solely because of having a criminal conviction. Licensing should not be denied when that past conviction does not substantially relate to the job the applicant is seeking. That is why we strongly support SB517.

Many people who go in the wrong direction and land in prison did not have good opportunities in their background. When they have paid their debt to society and return to it, let's not stand in the way of new opportunities. Let's prohibit discrimination. Please vote YES on SB517.