



To: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Iris Maria Chávez, Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools

Date: February 28, 2023

Re: SB 524 –

I write to you on behalf of the Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools, our state's charter support organization and are a coalition of community-based, public charter schools representing all corners of our state. We represent approximately 26,000 public school students in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade, operating in about 100 buildings.

SB 524 would create an advisory council, convened by the Criminal Justice Commission, to conduct a comprehensive review of the “forever crimes” list used in public school employment. The list needs revision as it is out of date and there are many technical challenges in the current background check process.

We acknowledge that we must keep our children safe in their places of learning but should also acknowledge that lists of this nature should be subject to period review for their applicability, validity and to identify use case issues. The functional process most certainly should be updated to give better information to schools conducting these background checks. The information school districts receive in the background check process is merely an “allowed” or “not allowed” reference, not comprehensive to help a school make the best determination as to their next steps. Schools often pay for other background checks from other sources.

We appreciate the approach this bill provides to reviewing and, perhaps, updating our current policies in this area.

Iris Maria Chávez
Oregon Coalition of Community Charter Schools (ORC3S)