



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Zach Hudson, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

Subject: House Bill 2405

Chair Hudson and members of the committee, my name is Larry Bennett, and I serve as Assistant Director of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) Correctional Services Division. I am providing neutral written testimony regarding House Bill (HB) 2405.

What the Bill Does:

HB 2405 would appropriate an unspecified amount of General Fund to DOC for the purpose of providing adult in custody education programs at four Eastern Oregon prisons: Snake River Correctional Facility (SRCI), Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution (EOCI), Powder River Correctional Facility (PRCF), and Two Rivers Correctional Facility (TRCI).

Background and Impacts:

DOC is legislatively authorized and funded to provide Adult Basic Skills Development and vocational training education. However, with the exception of the pilot program funded through SB 1522 (2022), DOC is not legislatively funded to support the provision of college-level courses.

Education has been proven to have a positive effect in reducing the risk to recidivate and, as a result, DOC has been very intentional in its efforts to increase its education offerings to help better prepare those in our custody for success. With the return of the Pell grant for incarcerated students, with the support of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and our legislators (SB 1522), and the dedication of our volunteer college and university partners, DOC has invested many hours and has made great strides in significantly expanding the availability of college credit courses in Oregon prisons. During the 2024 school program year, our post-secondary education partners provided the following credit-bearing courses.

2024 Provider	Facility	Credit-Bearing Courses Offered	# Classes	Enrollment	# Graduates
CCC	OSCI	AAOT	16	34	1
	OSP	AAOT	21	104	
	SCI	AAOT	25	52	
COCC	DRCI	AAOT	7	18	
		Welding Certification	10	10	10
Corbin	OSCI	4-year bachelor	23	77	18

2024 Provider	Facility	Credit-Bearing Courses Offered	# Classes	Enrollment	# Graduates	
Lewis & Clark	CRCI	College Inside Out	2	16		
PCC	CCCF	Various	14	119	1	
	CRCI	Pre-Trades Construction Career	9	33	29	
PSU	CCCF	Various	33	146	1	
	OSP	Various		14		
TVCC	EOCI	Various	5	30		
	PRCF	Peer Recovery Coach	2	14	14	
	SRCI	AAOT		20	93	
		Building Construction Trades		17		11
		Peer Recovery Coach		2		16
U of O	CCCF	In-person	14	78		
	OSCI	Work-packet		69		
	OSP		10	83		
TOTALS			230	990	101	

HB 2405 Institutions	46/20%	137/14%
Other DOC Institutions	184/80%	853/86%

CCC	Chemeketa Community College	PCC	Portland Community College
COCC	Central Oregon Community College	PSU	Portland State University
Corbin	Corbin University	TVCC	Treasure Valley Community College
Lewis & Clark	Lewis and Clark University	U of O	University of Oregon
CCCF	Coffee Creek Correctional Facility	PRCF	Powder River Correctional Facility
CRCI	Columbia River Correctional Institution	SCI	Santiam Correctional Institution
DRCI	Deer Ridge Correctional Institution	SFFC	South Fork Forest Camp
EOCI	Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution	SRCI	Snake River Correctional Institution
OSCI	Oregon State Correctional Institution	TRCI	Two Rivers Correctional Institution
OSP	Oregon State Penitentiary	WCCF	Warner Creek Correctional Institution

There is a significant discrepancy between the post-secondary education opportunities currently available in the four eastside institutions included in HB 2405 and the other eight DOC institutions. The HB 2405 institutions only receive 20 percent of the college courses offered statewide and represent only 14 percent of our current college enrollment. You will also notice there are zero programs offered at TRCI. And while this highlights the inequity in post-secondary education opportunities in our prisons, these percentages would be even lower were it not for the SB 1522 (2022) pilot online education funding that provided for the education administrative staff positions to support Treasure Valley Community College’s online education program at SRCI.

Eastern Oregon University (EOU) is in the midst of the U.S. Department of Education’s Pell grant education program approval process to provide prison education programs inside the

institutions covered in HB 2405. However, DOC does not currently have the education staff onsite in these institutions necessary to support bringing in new EOU education programs. Additional funding and positional authority would be needed for DOC to add onsite education administrative staff to supervise education computer labs, coordinate the addition of courses, support student learning, and assist with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (commonly known as FAFSA).

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Submitted by:
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