



TO: House Committee on Judiciary
FR: Dick Withnell, Oregon Business Council
DA: April 10, 2017
RE: Support for HB 3078, The Safety and Savings Act

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dick Withnell with the Oregon Business Council, and I'm testifying in support of The Safety and Savings Act (HB 3078).

Oregon is on the brink of opening another women's prison while female prison population rates continue to skyrocket. The vast majority of these women have been convicted of addiction-driven crimes. They have histories of trauma or mental health issues that need to be addressed through treatment, not incarceration. Additionally, 75% of women in prison are mothers, which means children throughout the state are separated from their primary caregiver.

HB 3078 targets cost drivers in our correction system and ensures that we do not have to open a new women's prison this session or for the next 10 years. Oregon can more effectively achieve accountability with appropriate sentences at a lower cost. Housing people in prison for drug and property crimes for excessively long times sucks away our ability to invest in areas we know will keep people out of prison and our communities safe.

Our state is in a \$1.7 billion deficit, and opening a new women's prison would cost an additional \$17.5 million every biennium at a time when we face cuts to drug and alcohol treatment programs, mental health services, victims' services, and supports for working families and families trying to find work.

The Safety and Savings Act would mean cost-savings, community-based services, addiction treatment, and increased family stability, all of which make our communities safer and stronger. The Safety and Savings Act contains a few elements, and we believe that all of them are essential.

- It prioritizes treatment services over longer sentences for addiction-driven crime, holding people accountable but ensuring cost savings to better achieve our shared public safety goals.
- It preserves and fixes the family sentencing alternative and expands short term transition leave to reduce recidivism and strengthen families.
- It continues funding Justice Reinvestment and victims' services so that people who've been harmed by crime and those who've been convicted of crime can receive services they need to heal and rebuild their lives.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. Again, I ask your support for The Safety and Savings Act (HB 3078), and I urge the Committee to move this bill forward.