

# ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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## Statement in Support for HB 3078, the Safety and Savings Act

April 11, 2017

Dear Chair Barker, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) supports our state's legislative efforts to advance public safety through community-based services to victims and offenders. Toward this end, we support Justice Reinvestment measures that divert expenses from costly prison expansion toward community-based alternatives. We urge you to pass House Bill 3078 to ensure full funding of the Justice Reinvestment and the Family Sentencing Alternative program.

EMO is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and public policy advocacy. One of EMO's direct service programs provides pro-social mentorship to individuals returning from prison, a successful program that has granted us a valuable perspective on the needs of persons involved in the legal system and the long-term consequences of incarceration on families and our local communities.

Based on this experience, EMO sees HB 3078 as strengthening family and community well-being. Parental incarceration is recognized as an Adverse Childhood Experience with life-term consequences. The Safety and Savings bill preserves the Family Sentencing Alternative, which helps children directly. It focuses investments into the treatment for addiction that can interrupt cycles of crime. And it interrupts our society's cycle of expanding prisons and incarcerating people without looking for deeper causes of problems.

Justice Reinvestment promises support to communities for victim services, treatment where appropriate, intensive offender supervision, and crime prevention. This local investment saves the state money by reducing prison bed usage, ultimately preventing the great expense of opening new prisons. We support continuing efforts to shift public spending from incarceration to effective community supervision strategies.

Community-based solutions better serve both individuals and strong, safer communities.

In a time of budget constraints, state money is best invested in community resources. Opening a new women's prison, to the cost of over \$17 million per year, can be avoided by less costly and more effective treatment-based approaches that target the addictions driving crime. HB 3078 is needed this year.

Thank you for considering the position of EMO on this matter, and for your work to increase justice, safety, savings, and public health through this legislation.

Sincerely,

Britt Conroy  
Public Policy Director, EMO