



TO: House Committee on Rules
FR: Ken Thrasher, Oregon Business Council
DA: May 25, 2017
RE: Support for HB 3078, The Safety and Savings Act

Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kenneth Thrasher, a retired business person and a member of the Oregon Business Council Poverty Task Force, and I'm testifying in support of The Safety and Savings Act (HB 3078). I also have served on the board previously of a halfway house called the Northwest Regional Re-Entry Center, helping it grow from 15 to 125 clients served, both men and women. Our goal was to use intervention strategies for early release, societal re-entry, housing, and job placement services to reduce recidivism. I also have mentored a parolee, giving them a job, and seen them flourish with a college degree, family and successful career.

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. My experience through research shows there is an 8:1 payback for intervention strategies versus putting them in prison.

The legislature has a real opportunity through HB 3078 to target our public safety dollars to local communities to hold people accountable and actually address the root causes of addiction and addiction-driven crime, instead of spending \$17.5 million on a new women's prison.

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 interventions and sentences at a lower cost. Housing people in prison for drug and property crimes for excessively long times takes away our ability to invest in areas we know will keep people out of prison and our communities safe. These issues and solutions have been a part of the Oregon Business Council for many years and the business community is committed to ensuring that effective solutions such as this move forward this session.

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 elements that we believe are all essential.

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