



TO: House Committee on Rules
FR: Gary Cobb, Community Outreach Coordinator
DA: March 25, 2017
RE: Support for HB 3078, The Safety and Savings Act

Chair Williamson, Co-Chairs McLane, Rayfield and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gary Cobb and I am the Community Outreach Coordinator for Central City Concern in Portland and I'm testifying in support of The Safety and Savings Act (HB 3078). Additionally, CCC is a member of OPERA, the group of Oregon providers of addiction prevention, education and recovery services. Central City Concern provides comprehensive and integrated primary and behavioral health care, supported affordable housing and employment services to 13,000 individuals exiting homelessness and poverty each year. We are recognized nationally by HUD, HHS, DOL and USDA for our innovative model of care which provides peer supported Recovery Housing to those seeking to address their substance use disorders, associated criminality and unemployment to get their lives back on track, reunite with children from foster care and resume healthy productive lives. As an individual who benefited from CCC's recovery housing, I sit here before you to share that I am a graduate of CCC's programming with 16 years in recovery from a heroin addiction and am a proud homeowner of 5 years.

CCC supports The Safety and Savings Act (HB 3078) because we know that we need to invest money not in new prisons, but in programming like ours that work to provide people pathways that lead them to contribute to a healthier community and promote their full potential. Just last week we had the privilege to host the Administrator SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment to highlight our astonishingly high rate of treatment completion and permanent housing tenure for those exiting our Recovery Housing, the majority of whom have histories of incarceration and homelessness. We know that the vast majority of women who are served by the criminal justice system are those who are impacted by substance use disorders, have histories of trauma and/or mental health issues that can be addressed through peer supported and Culturally specific treatment and housing, 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 is expensive and directs funding away from more cost effective evidence based practices like treatment combined with peer supported Recovery Housing and employment programming.

The Safety and Savings Act could result in 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 are essential.

1) 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;

2) It preserves and fixes the family sentencing alternative and expands short term transition leave to reduce recidivism and strengthen families; and

3) 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.