

Department of Community Justice



TO: Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs McLane and Rayfield and members of the House Committee on Rules

DATE: May 25, 2017

RE: Support for House Bill 3078

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs McLane and Rayfield and members of the Committee,

I am Scott Taylor, Director of Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3078.

We strongly support HB 3078 because it encompasses several key elements that strengthen our efforts to deliver effective supervision and services to justice involved individuals in Multnomah County. Proposed changes to the Family Sentencing Alternative Pilot program (FSAP), proposed expansion of Short Term Trans Leave (STTL), and changes in sentence lengths for property offenses will enhance our ability to deliver wraparound services to those under our supervision.

Multnomah County began development and implementation of wraparound with the Reentry Enhancement Coordination (REC) Program, which delivers wraparound services such as housing, treatment and mentoring, to people getting out of prison. A study conducted by the Criminal Justice Commission found that participants in this program had a recidivism rate of 16%, compared to a recidivism rate of 28% in the control group. Because of the success of the REC program, a major component of the Multnomah County Justice Reinvestment Program (MCJRP) is delivering wraparound services. As a recent study shows, MCJRP participants on supervision had similar or better recidivism rates than participants in the pre-Justice Reinvestment comparison group. This underscores the effectiveness of this program and why we are leading the State in fewer prison bed commitments.

Based on these experiences, I am here today to voice strong support for HB 3078. We have testified in support of proposed changes to FSAP and STTL during this legislative session because we believe these changes will improve outcomes.

This bill will eliminate some of the statutory restrictions to program participation with FSAP and broaden the number of counties eligible to participate. Multnomah County is one of five counties participating in the current Family Sentencing Alternative Program Pilot. During 2016, 75 participants engaged in the program statewide, impacting the lives of 139 children who would have otherwise ended up in the foster care system. Approximately 30 individuals have participated in Multnomah County's program.

Currently, barriers include disqualifications due to crime and because an individual is pregnant and not yet considered to be parenting. We could serve many more participants, and possibly even have a waitlist for this program, if these barriers were removed. The most important aspect of the program is that participants are able to continue parenting their children in the community and not housed in prison. Participants are assessed and then receive intensive supervision and wrap-around services. DCJ manages these individuals in the community with the help of our public safety and community partners.

This bill is also proposing to expand Short Term Transitional Leave (STTL) beyond the current 90 day maximum for certain specified sentences. Multnomah County strongly supports any increase in STTL. Statewide, STTL has been the single most successful strategy from HB 3194, known as the Justice Reinvestment Act, preventing the expansion of our prison system. In a 2017 review by the Criminal Justice Commission, inmates who participate in the STTL program show lower 1-year and 2-year recidivism rates than inmates who were statutorily eligible and did not participate.

For Multnomah County, between July 2014-June 2016, 32,014 prison bed days have been saved as a result of Multnomah County inmates released to STTL, allowing the Department of Corrections to avoid spending another \$3.2 million in operation costs. When looking at statewide prison bed use across counties, Multnomah County continues to consistently lead in the reduction of prison bed usage to help the State reach the reduction needed to avoid building another prison. These numbers demonstrate that this policy is clearly working.

Lastly, we are supportive of the proposed reductions in sentence length and number of prior convictions for property offenses. Research continues to demonstrate that a graduated punishment model does not make a difference and costs valuable resources. We supervise individuals on probation and post prison supervision and would prefer the opportunity to impact them in the community with effective programming rather than using limited resources to placing them in prison. The Multnomah County wraparound model continues to have excellent results when compared with a prison first model. For example, we have a higher percentage of high risk on our supervision than the state average yet our recidivism rates for high risk is considerably lower than the state average.

To reiterate, Multnomah County Department of Community Justice strongly supports this bill because the changes proposed work to strengthen our ability to deliver wraparound services to support our probationers and parolees to be successful in their home communities. We believe these changes will help invest limited resources where they will have the biggest impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Submitted by:

Scott Taylor, Director
Multnomah County Department of Community Justice