

March 14, 2019

To: House Committee on Judiciary
From: Erica Rubin
Re: Support for HB 3064, the Accountability and Equity Act

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Erica Rubin. I have lived in Oregon for the past 47 years and am testifying in support of the Accountability and Equity Act (HB 3064).

I have been fortunate enough to never have been a victim of a serious crime - nor have I ever committed one. However, I feel strongly that every resident of Oregon is impacted by our justice system and it is important that our system be both effective and equitable.

I recently visited the Equal Justice Initiative museum in Montgomery, AL and was deeply moved by the experience. It has motivated me to learn more about criminal justice in Oregon and I recently found out about Justice Reinvestment, passed in 2013 and this update, HB3064.

I am very proud that Oregon is seeking to reduce use of prisons and to provide much needed services to both victims and perpetrators of crime. It is my understanding that, while many counties have indeed reduced the number of people being sentenced to prison, not all are following the spirit of this legislation. HB 3064 will provide additional incentive to counties to work towards the goals of Justice Reinvestment and will continue to provide grant support to the counties that are being successful in doing so.

Prison cannot be the default for so many lives that might be re-directed to a more positive future. HB 3064 will continue the provision of funds to counties that are working to find alternatives to incarceration as well as providing funding for victim assistance. For the few that are falling a bit short, HB 3064 would ensure that they get the technical assistance that they need to succeed, and only after refusing to aspire toward the intended outcomes will they risk losing funding.

We cannot continue to use prisons to disproportionately punish people from underserved and targeted communities such as people of color and tribal members. We need to provide more equitable services to these groups, as well as other communities that are impacted by crime: LGBTQ people and residents of more rural areas. Services are needed for victims as well as those who commit crimes. The Equity Advisory Committee to the Criminal Justice Commission proposed in HB 3064 will move us forward.

I believe Justice Reinvestment is living up to its promises in saving Oregon taxpayers a great deal of money while assisting both victims and criminals to move forward into productive lives. It only makes sense that, after seeing its impact and how the various counties have responded, there be a re-evaluation of how to make it work even better.

I urge you to support HB 3064 and to move this bill forward.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

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