

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Oregon Faith Movement

Board Members

The Rev. J.W. Matt Hennessee
Chair

The Rev. Linda Jaramillo
Chair Elect

Joe Snyder
Immediate Past Chair

John Andrea
Treasurer

The Rev. Valerie Walker
Secretary

The Rev. Dr. Mark Brocker

The Rev. Vicky Brown

The Rev. Roberta Egli

The Rev. Don Frueh

The Rev. Michael Grogan

Melinda Gross

The Rev. Andrew Guthrie

The Rev. Dr. LeRoy Haynes, Jr.

The Rev. Mark Knutson

Glenna Kruger

The Very Rev. Nathan LeRud

The Rev. Margaret Marcuson

The Rev. Terry McCray Hill

The Rev. Nancy McGrath Green

Peter Sergienko

Julia Spence

Gary Withers

Letty Owings

The Rev. Dr. Rodney Page

Lifetime Members

Jan Musgrove Elfers

President

TO: House Committee on Judiciary

FR: Jan Elfers, President
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
0245 SW Bancroft Street, Suite B, Portland Oregon 97239

DA: March 14, 2019

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 Jan Elfers, and I'm testifying in support of the Accountability and Equity Act (HB 3064).

I am the President of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (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 inter-religious dialogue, public policy advocacy and climate justice work.

I am here to share why Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon supports the Accountability and Equity Act (HB 3064).

Justice Reinvestment has been a success, saving the state funds, advancing public safety, and investing in local victim services. Crucially, it has reduced the number of lives impacted by imprisonment. The current bill builds on the strengths of Justice Reinvestment, based on what we have learned in its first years.

We especially appreciate HB 3064's focus on equity. Fair treatment of all Oregonians is essential to the integrity of our justice system. For too long, the criminal justice system has reflected the inequities of our wider society, with disparate impacts burdening communities of color and other marginalized populations. As we seek to make meaningful changes to reform our justice system, it is essential that we ensure these changes reduce disparities, instead of heightening them. Members of the Equity Advisory Committee will provide needed expertise to guide this process.

We are also grateful for the ways this bill focuses on accountability. Accountability lies at the core of our justice system, and we support this bill's provisions requiring implementation of needed Justice Reinvestment reforms to receive state funding for that work. We want all Oregon communities to succeed. The counties that need additional motivation to adopt Justice Reinvestment principles will be aided by the systematic data collection, to measure successes and spaces for needed growth.

Faith communities understand that our responsibilities to one another are not interrupted by prison walls or criminal records. Our commitment to respect for each person's dignity matters most to those who are vulnerable and on the margins.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I ask your support for the Accountability and Equity Act (HB 3064), and I urge the Committee to move this bill forward.