



# Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

April 25, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary

**RE: Senate Bill 16**

Chair Barker and members of the House Judiciary Committee, I am Heidi Steward, Assistant Director of the Offender Management and Rehabilitation Division for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill (SB) 16 and answer questions.

**What the Bill Does:**

SB 16 provides for the confidentiality of communications between a crime victim and an inmate when the communication occurs in a facilitated dialogue or responsibility letter bank program.

**Background Information:**

Restorative justice programs, including facilitated dialogues and responsibility letter exchanges, can promote justice and healing for crime victims and survivors and aid inmates in the process of their rehabilitation. These dialogues and letters are most successful when the participants are able to communicate openly and honestly about the crime and its impact, knowing that what they communicate will not be shared with other people or used against them later.

By definition, facilitated dialogue and responsibility letter bank communications means all communications by a victim, survivor, or adult in custody or by a program facilitator, advisory committee member, or staff person that are made during the course of or in connection with a facilitated dialogue or responsibility letter bank program conducted pursuant to rules of the Department of Corrections.

**Issues Addressed by the Bill:**

This bill establishes confidentiality in the facilitated dialogue and responsibility letter bank programs, which will allow open communication between the victim and offender and result in increased effectiveness as to victim healing and offender rehabilitation.

**Requested Action:**

For the reasons stated above, the department supports SB 16, and encourages the committee to vote it out of committee with a do pass recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

*Submitted by:*

Oregon Department of Corrections

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