



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Policy Director
In Support of SB 690
House Committee on Judiciary
May 22, 2017**

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon¹ supports SB 690, which would create procedures for applying for a Certificate of Good Standing (CGS).

As a nonpartisan organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, the ACLU of Oregon supports efforts that help people successfully reintegrate back to their communities after conviction. The ACLU of Oregon supports SB 690 because it will remove barriers to housing and employment that will reduce recidivism, thereby creating safer and fairer communities.

Felony convictions stigmatize people long after they have been rehabilitated and served their sentences, and especially upon immediate release from incarceration. Two of the biggest collateral consequences of incarceration are being denied stable housing and employment opportunities when a person returns to their community. Stable housing is key to improving family reunification and increasing access to employment, education, and social services, all of which contribute to a person's short term and long term success post-incarceration.²

SB 690 will remove barriers to successful reentry. Applying for and receiving a CGS will provide housing providers and employers verified information about an applicant's good standing, which will allow people with criminal records to more easily access those critical resources after they serve their sentence and demonstrate rehabilitation.³

SB 690 will promote public safety. Research shows that people with criminal records are less likely to re-offend if they have a home and a job.⁴ In other words, supporting people in

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonprofit organization with more than 40,000 members in the State of Oregon.

² Graffam, J., A. Shinkfield, and W. McPherson, "Variables Affecting Successful Reintegration as Perceived by Offenders and Professionals," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 2004, 40: 147-71.

³ Currently eleven states, including Washington, New York, and Arizona, have similar programs that address barriers to reentry.

⁴ One study by the Corporation for Supportive Housing in New York showed that the use of state prisons and city jails dropped by 74 percent and 40 percent, respectively, when

successful reentry, by removing barriers to stable housing and employment, will reduce recidivism. Reducing recidivism means saving tax payer money and reinvesting it in services that help the entire community.

SB 690 will strengthen fairness. After a person has been held accountable by demonstrating their rehabilitation and completing their sentence, they should not continue to be punished. This kind of unfair and excessive penalty only increases the likelihood that a person will re-offend. Instead, SB 690 will establish a process to recognize the hard work that individuals have put into rehabilitating, and support those individuals in their continued work as contributing members of their communities.

For each of these reasons, the ACLU of Oregon urges you to support SB 690.

people with mental health issues and past criminal records were provided supportive housing. Dennis P. Culhane, Stephen Metraux, and Trevor Hadley, "The New York Agreement Cost Study: The Impact of Supportive Housing on Services Use for Homeless Mentally Ill Individuals," *Corporation for Supportive Housing*, May 2001, <http://www.csh.org/html/NYNYSummary.pdf>.