



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

March 13, 2019

The Honorable Margaret Doherty, Chair
House Committee on Education

RE: HB 2910

Chair Doherty and members of the committee, I am Heidi Steward, Assistant Director of the Correctional Services Division for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to testify in support of HB 2910 and answer any questions.

What the Bill Does:

HB 2910 confirms individuals who meet educational requirements during incarceration are eligible for the Oregon Promise Grant program. It also establishes a new deadline by which men and women in DOC custody must apply for the grant program. Currently, the deadline to enroll in qualifying college courses and apply for the grant program is six months after obtaining a high school diploma or GED. This bill extends eligibility for the Oregon Promise Grant program for people in DOC custody to six months after conclusion of their period of incarceration or detention.

Background Information:

DOC does not have the technology to provide men and women in our custody the opportunity to participate in online community college-level courses. Many men and women miss out on the opportunity to apply for an Oregon Promise Grant because they obtain their GED while incarcerated, but are then unable to enroll in the qualifying college courses and apply for the grant program while serving the remainder of their sentence. Delaying the six-month application window to start after the conclusion of their period of incarceration will provide individuals releasing from DOC custody sufficient time to qualify and apply for the Oregon Promise Grant program.

Requested Action:

Higher education is one of the most powerful deterrents to crime and reincarceration. Given this, and the reasons mentioned above, the department requests the House Committee on Education vote HB 2910 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:

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