



TO: House Committee on Judiciary
FR: Paul Solomon, executive director, Sponsors, Inc.
DA: March 14, 2019
RE: Support for HB 3064, the Accountability and Equity Act

Board of Directors

Steve Christiansen, *Chair*
Steve Hecker, *Vice Chair*
Jason Pellegrini, *Treasurer*
Zoe York, *Secretary*
Brian Cox
Chris Elliott
Margaret Hallock
Tricia Hedin
Trina Kanewa
Sen. James Manning
Kevin Moore
Guadalupe Quinn
Hon. Ilisa Rooke-Ley
Peter Shannon
Darren Stone
Richie Weinman

Staff

Paul Solomon
Executive Director
Nick Crapser
Deputy Director
Laura Johnson
Director of Program Development

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

My name is Paul Solomon and I am the Executive Director at Sponsors, Inc, based in Eugene. Since 1973, Sponsors has been a leader in the implementation of evidence-based practices in prisoner reentry, providing housing, treatment and ancillary services to men and women in Lane County.

I also chair the Lane County's Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC); serve on the Governor's Reentry Council, as well as a host of other boards related to public safety. I am here today to testify in support of HB 3064, the Justice Reinvestment Accountability and Equity Act.

I have worked and advocated for the Justice Reinvestment program since its inception, including working to help pass HB 3194 during the 2013 legislative session. Since then Sponsors has experienced firsthand the incredible changes that the Justice Reinvestment Grant program has catalyzed across Oregon. Foundationally, the changes we have seen are a direct result of increased communication amongst public safety stakeholders -- stakeholders who come together through the Local Public Safety Coordinating Councils to develop and implement local JRI programs. In Lane County, we have seen a significant reduction in the county's utilization of state prison beds and have continued to make progress in our efforts to reduce recidivism. A recent analysis of our STTL releases between December 2013 and December of 2018 indicated that over 48,000 prison days were avoided, and Lane County compared to the Metro Region Counties had the lowest rate of failures with a new crime at 1.2%.

Our success has been possible because our public safety stakeholders worked together to understand the specific needs and opportunities in our communities, analyze our programs and outcomes, and continuously reanalyze these to ensure we are enhancing public safety in the most cost-effective manner. These collaborations are the bedrock of JRI and one of the best outcomes.

In the early days of JRI funding, Lane and Marion County were identified as having much higher utilization of prison beds and lengths of stay for various offenses than other Metro counties. There are a variety of reasons for this, one being that we lacked the resources to provide the right types of interventions. We also were sending people to

Services for People with Criminal Histories Since 1973

Phone: (541) 485-8341 Address: 338 Highway 99 North, Eugene, OR 97402 Fax: (541) 683-6196

Tax ID# 93-0639815

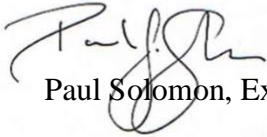
prison for property crimes for longer than necessary lengths of stay. As a result, we knew changes in local practices were critical to the statewide success of JRI.

So, we doubled down, we came together as a public safety community, and worked with the CJC to identify the best ways to improve our outcomes. We took to heart the spirit of accountability that was built into HB 3194 and made the necessary changes, locally, to reduce our prison utilization. However, to insure compliance with the accountability spirit of JRI statewide, additional safeguards are now necessary. I appreciate that the accountability outlined in House Bill 3064 leaves discretion to the very competent staff at the Criminal Justice Commission to both provide technical assistance and/or provisional funding to counties that need it -- to help them find and implement the right kind of investments.

Further, I believe the public safety system overall, and Justice Reinvestment in particular, will benefit from the work of an equity advisory committee to help all of us involved in public safety better understand the racial and ethnic disparities and how best to address them.

The Justice Reinvestment Accountability and Equity Act is a smart, and modest modification to one of Oregon's most successful public safety programs. It ensures that we are continuously looking to guarantee our programs are meeting our desired outcomes and that we are doing our best work, which is imperative for any policy implementation. Please support HB 3064.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Solomon", written in a cursive style.

Paul Solomon, Executive Director