



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Policy Director  
In Support of SB 778  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
March 25, 2019**

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon<sup>1</sup> supports SB 778, which will (a) expand access to a Certificate of Good Standing (CGS) for all individuals with felony and misdemeanor convictions in Oregon, and (b) increase access to professional licensing, careers, and volunteer opportunities for individuals who obtain a CGS.

**Removing barriers to housing and employment after incarceration is critical for reducing recidivism and creating safer, fairer communities.** Long after a person completes the conditions of their sentences, a felony conviction can still create stigma and create barriers to housing and employment opportunities. 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.<sup>2</sup>

**Certificates of Good Standing help remove barriers to successful reentry.** A CGS provides housing providers and employers verified information about an applicant's good standing, which helps people with criminal records more easily access those critical resources after they serve their sentence and demonstrate rehabilitation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 45,000 members and supporters statewide.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 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

**Certificates of Good Standing promote public safety.** Research shows that supporting people in successful reentry, by removing barriers to stable housing and employment, reduces future offenses and recidivism. Reducing recidivism saves tax payer money and opens up those funds to be reinvested in services that help the entire community.

**For these reasons, we supported SB 690 in 2017, the bill that created Certificates of Good Standing.** And these reasons remain true when considering an expansion of access to and the benefits of a CGS.

**The ACLU of Oregon urges you to support SB 778.** Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.