

Subject: Yes on HB 2169

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Mile Mabray and I live in Eugene, Oregon.

I am writing in support of HB 2169 because all of us deserve a public safety and criminal justice system that truly keeps all of us safe. HB 2169 will create an opportunity for the entire state of Oregon to implement effective criminal justice processes focused in restorative justice, equity, and accountability.

I am the Executive Director of the Center for Dialogue and Resolution, a community mediation center serving Lane County.

Our Center has run a restorative justice criminal diversion program since 2014. We work with in partnership with the District Attorney's office to provide a restorative criminal process for offenders in Lane County. Over the last seven years, our program has seen a 90% success rate for offenders completing a restorative diversion program, which has helped keep families together, address issues offenders face related to issues of mental health, education, equity, and many other factors that lead to crime.

The restorative justice process is designed to achieve three main goals: first, to take a victim-centered approach, second, to ensure meaningful accountability by those who cause harm, and third, to address the impacts of crime on our communities.

As you know, the impact of crime on victims causes severe trauma. The criminal justice system is not designed to address this trauma, and often leaves people harmed in a state of re-traumatization. The restorative process directly addresses trauma and the impacts crime has on people harmed.

The way the restorative process does this is by focusing on accountability. In a punitive process, accountability is passive. There is no active acknowledgement by the offender of the harm they've caused, and no active repair of the impacts of that crime on the victim and our communities.

The accountability through a restorative process is one where people take an active role in addressing the impact of their actions.

In a restorative process, once the person who causes harm takes active accountability for their actions, the victim, a community member, and the offender, co-create an agreement that outlines how the offender can repair the harm caused by their actions. Agreements often include action items such as reparation, pursuing mental health treatment, pursuing education and financial literacy, public/community service, and many other elements by which offenders can take full accountability for their actions, while also addressing the impacts of their crime on people harmed and the community.

The cost of maintaining the status quo of the traditional criminal justice system is high. Reports from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission show increasing rates of re-arrests, convictions, and re-incarceration. These increased rates not only cost our state in dollars, but also have ancillary costs to society, such as single parent homes, economic hardship, increased need for social services, and many other indirect costs. The restorative diversion process helps to reduce recidivism all of these costs through restorative justice programs run by community-based agencies working in partnership with state and local legal systems.

My hope today is to emphasize the importance of this work, and the opportunity the Judiciary Committee has to transform the criminal justice system in Oregon.

The question we're addressing is, how can we make the criminal justice system better? How can we improve public safety, reduce costs to tax payers, reduce the burden on police departments, prosecutors, parole and probation, and the prison system, and most of all, how can we change the system to reduce the impact of crime on our communities and on people harmed, and give offenders a chance to succeed? House Bill 2169 provides the opportunity to address these questions, to implement effective restorative diversion processes, and it gives our state the opportunity to provide justice for all.

Thank you very much for your time and for considering this bill.