

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means
From: Mary VanderWeele, resident of District 17, represented by Co-Chair Steiner Hayward
Re: Written Testimony in Support of SB 397

I am an Oregon lawyer with 30+ years of experience. I write in support of SB 397, which would reform Oregon's set aside statute, ORS 137.225. It has a small fiscal for one FTE.

I came to expungement (set-aside) work as the leader of NIKE's pro bono committee, in partnership with the Oregon Law Center in Hillsboro. Our pro bono committee found that ORS 137.225 in its current form is difficult to navigate even by lawyers with decades of experience, it is out of step with other states and data on recidivism, and it does not fulfill the intent of the legislature to allow Oregonians who have completed their sentences to move on from the stigma of their criminal records.

All of the key system stakeholders in the set-aside process have been involved in crafting this bill and support it as a long-overdue piece of criminal justice reform that advances racial justice and equity:

- Oregon State Police
- Oregon Judicial Department
- Oregon District Attorneys Association
- Multnomah County DA's office
- Multnomah Public Defender
- Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

SB 397 also supports the economic health and recovery of the state by allowing people with criminal records to access opportunities for jobs, housing and education, reducing their reliance on public assistance. If this bill has any impact on the state budget, it will more than pay for itself.

Finally, please note 40% of children have a parent with a criminal record. For this reason, SB 397 is critically important for the well-being of Oregon's children and families.

Thank you for your support of this important piece of legislation, and thank you for your service.

Best regards,

Mary VanderWeele
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PS: Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions about the bill. I recently retired from NIKE but still do pro bono work in Multnomah and Washington counties.