



Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,

My name is Debra Pennington Davis. I am the Restorative Justice Coordinator for Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center in the Columbia River Gorge. Our service area includes five rural counties in Oregon's seventh judicial district. Through the CJC's Restorative Justice Grant Program, we are building a pre-charge restorative justice program to meet the needs of survivors and impacted community members.

To build effective options for survivors in our communities, we are collaborating with system and community partners—including victim advocates from the DA's office and the Columbia River Intertribal Police Department. We are working in consultation with New York University's Center on Violence and Recovery which is dedicated to advancing knowledge on the causes and consequences of violence and trauma, and developing solutions that foster healing among individuals and families. Our program will provide processes for a variety of case types, and it will include restorative survivor support circles where survivors can safely share their stories and build healing connections with others who have been impacted by acts of harm.

I first understood the need for restorative justice when someone I love dearly was impacted by a criminal act of harm. I learned that a single act of harm—when not adequately addressed--can have long lasting, life-disrupting impacts for survivors, their families, and their communities. I learned that the traditional criminal justice process can unintentionally produce secondary trauma and that survivors often need a more personal, meaningful accountability than the traditional system can offer. Many survivors have significant questions that only the responsible party can answer. Survivors often need the responsible party to understand how the crime has impacted their lives. They need to hear the responsible party honestly and voluntarily take responsibility for the harm they caused and commit to repairing things where possible. Conversations like these are difficult. They require openness, honesty, and vulnerability—and they can be transformative for both parties.

Research tells us that when survivor needs are addressed through restorative justice processes, healing is more likely, mental health outcomes improve, and responsible parties are less likely to commit further acts of harm. Confidentiality protections safeguard the honesty and openness that are at the heart of restorative justice processes. In rural communities like ours, where we frequently know each other's friends, families, and co-workers, this confidentiality is even more essential.

On behalf of Six Rivers and the communities we serve, I urge you to support Senate Bill 586 and help us provide effective options for healing, accountability, and increased safety in our communities. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.