



February 14, 2023

To: The Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety,

I am testifying to express my very strong support for continued funding of the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature took an important, if not ground-breaking step by investing in restorative justice and its use as an alternative to prosecution. This grant program has helped establish and expand eight programs across the state – from the coast, to the Gorge, from central to eastern Oregon and from the Metro area to tribal communities and the southern part of the state.

These programs are ground-breaking because they put victims and survivors at the center of a process that gives the victims of crime a voice in a way that our formal justice processes rarely do, a process that holds accountable those who have caused serious harms while ensuring that there is the possibility for them truly repair that harm.

In doing so, these restorative justice programs improve public safety, reducing the state's reliance on incarceration, and help address the terrible disproportionate impact of these systems on communities of color and other disadvantaged communities.

Oregon should be proud of the role that the Criminal Justice Commission plays in helping to reform and improve our justice system and processes to be more equitable and fairer to all involved, for reducing harm and our reliance on punitive and ineffective responses and, by doing so, saving money for the Oregon tax payer.

The Restorative Justice grant program is, in my opinion, the most ground-breaking, innovative and forward thinking initiative of the CJC to date and it's potential has barely been developed. Maintaining funding for this grant program is essential to Oregon delivering on its promise to provide a fair and equitable justice system that actually works.

The CJC's Restorative Justice funded projects cover at least a dozen counties and tribal communities, have the support of the Public Defenders of Oregon, many District Attorneys and a coalition of over 50 community-based practitioners from all corners of the state.

The committee and, indeed, all of Oregon should be proud of its investment in ground-breaking restorative justice programs that puts the state at the forefront of sensible, effective and impactful justice reform efforts and I urge you to approve the full amount – if not more – requested in the CJSs budget for the Restorative Justice Grant Program.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Fulford', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

**Simon Fulford**  
**President**