Facts you may or may not be aware of:
1) 95% of Adult Incarceration will be released someday.
2) Currently, the recidivism rate in Oregon is roughly 53% in three years (although some estimates suggest as high as 75%) - more than half of all AICs released will be back in prison within 3 years.
3) The average cost to incarcerate an individual in Oregon is $42,664 per year (remember, half of these will be right back in the system within 3 years)
     https://nicic.gov/resources/nic-library/state-statistics/2019/oregon-2019

Our criminal justice system is failing and those failures are bleeding the state of valuable resources that could be used elsewhere. When you were a child, what was told you to would be the key to a better life? How could you come from any background, location, status, race, culture, religion or ability and make something of yourself? Education.

Now imagine you came from a broken home, poor and/or of a minority race. You didnt have parents that were around to teach you to read and write, you didnt know how to form social relationships, you might not have been able to make it to school every day for any variety of reason. You were written off, pushed aside, ridiculed and made fun of your entire life and told you'd never amount to anything....and thats exactly how it played out. Then you find yourself in prison some day. Now when you do get out (as 95% of those will), you can add "felon" to your resume. Now you cant even get a job because you have nothing to offer the world and you're a "less then". These arent the people you, I or our neighbors want living in our neighborhood because they've got nothing more to lose in life. More crimes get committed. Back to prison and the taxpayers get to foot the $43k/year to keep you there.

I know these people. Years ago I spent 2.5 years in prison for a crime thats now been overturned. Despite what some may say, prison was not a summer camp. It was hell. You know what was worse? Getting out and dealing with the fact that your record says you're a felon - and I had everything going for me, supportive friends and family, a Masters Degree education and many years of success throughout my life. I cannot begin to imagine the hardships and torture of having no self confidence because I never amounted to anything in life AND never achieved anything like most of these individuals.

While in prison, I used my Masters Degree in the most productive way I could - helping others. i became a tutor and held that job for 2 years while locked up. 16 men

that I directly worked with obtained their GED while incarcerated. 16 men walked out of prision at some point knowing for the first time in their life they had accomplished something, anything they could be proud of, that nobody could ever take away. They had hope for the first time in their lives. I also helped run a college lab where we looked through course catalogs and filled out FAFSA applications so they could actually continue their educational journeys when they got out. A number of those individuals have reached out to me since we all got out to thank me for the help and conficence they worked so hard to get and told me how it changed their lives - just a simple GED.

When you give people a chance, provide them with a real opportunity to learn and grow, amazing changes can and do take place. I saw it. Yes, those in prison screwed up (but some not as badly as the media might make it seem). This bill isnt rewarding criminality, its preventing it from taking place again, from more damage being done to the community, from needless taxpayer dollars being squandered on unnecessary expenses. This bill provides a path out of the vicious cycle of the criminal justice system. These are real men with hopes and aspirations to actually be somebody and make something of themselves and the truth is, only those that want a better life will utilize the passage of this bill.

Please vote YES on SB 270 for a better future for Oregon. Thank you.