



To: House Committee On Judiciary

Date: April 13, 2023

RE: Support for SB 586

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Restorative Justice Coalition of Oregon (RJCO) to provide our full support for the passage of SB 586. RJCO is the only state-wide coalition of Oregon restorative justice practitioners and programs. We promote and support the implementation and practice of restorative justice principles and models in Oregon's justice, law enforcement, educational, and other community institutions to ensure that the needs of crime victims, criminal justice involved individuals, and the community are met.

Restorative justice is practiced in many counties across Oregon, including Clackamas, Deschutes, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Lincoln, Multnomah, Polk, Wasco, and Washington. Several tribes have peacemaking courts that incorporate similar practices.

SB 586 is a necessary expansion of pre-existing confidentiality statutes and builds on similar and already established principles and protections in Oregon Rules, such as ORS 423.600, ORS 420A.300, and ORS 161.398. With the passage of HB 2204 in 2021, and the creation of the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program, Oregon's use of restorative justice has significantly increased. Oregon should now update its confidentiality laws to reflect this growth.

Restorative justice results in high victim and survivor satisfaction rates and lowered recidivism rates.

- Restorative justice leads to healing for survivors. 91% of survivors who participated in a restorative justice process in Alameda County reported that they would participate again, and an equal number stated that they would recommend the process to a friend (Baliga, 2017).
- Studies have found that participating in restorative justice increases survivors' perception of safety, security, and closure. In one randomized control trial, participating victims reported substantially reduced post-traumatic stress symptoms (Strang, 2003).
- Restorative justice generates a lower risk of recidivism than traditional justice processes. Restorative justice programs in San Francisco (Gascon, 2019) and Alameda County (Baliga, 2017) yielded significant reductions (e.g., a 44 percent decrease) in recidivism for youths compared to those processed through the criminal system.

SB 586 does not restrict any processes or undertakings of law enforcement, it simply protects the confidentiality of dialogue between someone who has been harmed and the person who caused the harm, much like those same protections offered to mediation or a doctor/patient relationship.

We urge you to pass SB 586 for the benefit of all Oregonians, the healing that restorative justice processes can offer to victims of crime and the accountability it can ensure with those who cause harm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simon Fulford", written over a horizontal line.

Simon Fulford
President