

Submitter: Theresa Huggins  
On Behalf Of: CJC Restorative Justice Grant funding  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Theresa Huggins. I am the Program Manager for the Portland Community Justice Partnership (PCJP). A recipient of last year's Criminal Justice Commissions (CJC) Restorative Justice Grant. Due to the overwhelming number of citizens that attended yesterday's April 8, 2023 community session I did not give my testimony. My colleague Thomas Dickerson was able to testify about our support of the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) Restorative Justice Grant; and we all believe that his story said it all. His story, like so many others, speaks on the importance of Restorative Justice (RJ) programming. There is much research and data that demonstrates the value of Restorative Justice alternatives to incarceration, but to hear the testimony of someone whose life has been changed because of Restorative Justice Programming says it all.

I know the value of data so I want to point out some of the data that has become well known and is easy to find if you want to verify what I say. The research has shown the benefits of Restorative Justice programming and alternatives reduced recidivism, increased victim satisfaction and decreased their fear of being re-victimized. Other research shows that for the offender there are life changing opportunities for them when asked to take accountability in a community setting and when empathy is involved. I know when people hear this they often think that Restorative Justice options are soft on crime, but I am here to say that is not true. It takes courage and strength to overcome the fear most offenders face when they are asked to be accountable. Some offenders would rather go to jail where they don't have to face the harm they caused and can maintain their innocence or prestige within the institution as a tough guy. Offenders can not participate in RJ without taking accountability and expressing their willingness to repair the harm they caused. Our program is designed to assist people with this journey as it centers the repair on the victim. Allowing all those impacted to have a voice in the outcome. Because RJ programs demand that offenders take accountability and the responsibility to repair the harm they cause, RJ programming is well suited to work in collaboration with and within the community of the traditional Criminal Justice System. PCJP systems partner is the Portland Police. Our pilot program is still in the development stage and we are just beginning to see the fruits of our labors. We have partnered with community based organizations with a myriad of resources to allow our clients to have the support they need to effectively participate and be successful in and after this program. I want to point out that many of the programs discussed yesterday are important community partners for RJ programming; from child care to senior care we work to ensure all of our clients have the support that they need to be successful beyond our services. Yesterday, the

foundation that asked to support those in the community with brain damage did not talk about the research that found that eighty percent of people in prison have some sort of brain damage as compared to about five percent of the average person on the street. Did you know this? Look it up. Together with our systems and community partners, our victim-centered approach to restorative justice encourages growth and healing so individuals involved can move forward with their lives, work together with all those involved to find unique and effective ways to repair harm, feel safer in their community, and find justice.

I ask that you vote to fund the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant (RJGP), so that we in Oregon can ensure that Restorative Justice programs, like ours, thrive. Oregon has just begun to do the work of Restorative Justice. Please allow us to grow as we continue to support the people and communities we live in.