

HB 2233 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Judiciary

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure directs the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) to establish a legal services program to assist adults in custody at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility with community reentry and reintegration, including employment, housing, benefits, and protection from domestic violence. The measure appropriates \$1,200,000 for the CJC to issue grants to the Oregon Justice Resource Center (OJRC) and requires CJC and OJRC to report back to the Legislature by September 15, 2026. It repeals the measure on December 31, 2027. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Incarcerated individuals have limited access to attorneys and resources to engage in civil legal work. Federal regulations prohibit legal services organizations, such as Legal Aid Services of Oregon, from providing civil legal services to incarcerated individuals. 45 C.F.R. § 1637. To protect incarcerated individuals' constitutional right to access to the courts, the Department of Corrections provides access to legal libraries, but those resources are prioritized by rule for adults in custody who are raising legal challenges to their conviction or sentence or bringing action related to a condition of their confinement. OAR 291-139-0110; OAR 291-139-0120. Oregon created a pilot program to address some of these concerns in 2019 with House Bill 2631, appropriating \$800,000 and setting a sunset date of December 31, 2021. This project was named Re*Membering and provided legal assistance involving an array of legal issues such as family law matters, debt collection and financial concerns, employment barriers, driver's licenses and identification, and housing and property matters. In 2021, House Bill 2912 reauthorized the funding and appropriated \$800,000, with a sunset date of December 31, 2024.