

Submitter: Colleen Regalbuto  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Public Safety  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5005

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Colleen Regalbuto, and I am the Program Manager at Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center, a nonprofit community mediation and restorative justice organization serving Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties.

I am writing to urge you to fully fund the Restorative Justice Grant Program within the Criminal Justice Commission budget. Without this critical funding, much of the effective and impactful restorative justice work happening across Oregon—including at Six Rivers—would be at risk of stalling or disappearing entirely.

Six Rivers has used these grant funds to launch Circles of Peace, a restorative justice program specifically designed for our rural communities. Now in its pilot year, Circles of Peace was developed after an extensive community readiness assessment confirmed strong local support for restorative justice as an option for victims/survivors of crime.

We recently completed a Circles of Peace case involving an assault, where both participants engaged in numerous talking circles—both separately and jointly—to explore the impact of the incident and establish agreements to prevent future violence. One participant shared, “This circle can completely change someone’s life around.”

Currently, we have multiple active cases in progress, with additional cases in intake and on a waitlist. Cases only move forward if they have the support of the survivor, responsible party, district attorney, victim advocate, and defense. We also have a rigorous intake process to ensure suitability, which, in some cases, includes screening by a behavioral health professional.

Continued funding for the Restorative Justice Grant Program will allow Six Rivers and other community-based organizations across Oregon to sustain and expand this essential work—reducing crime, promoting accountability, and providing healing opportunities for survivors.

You can learn more about Circles of Peace at <https://6rivers.org/circles-of-peace/>.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Colleen Regalbuto  
Program Manager  
Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center