



**Hearing on HB 2747  
February 18, 2025**

**Testimony of Aliza B. Kaplan, Professor and Director of the Criminal Justice Reform  
Clinic at Lewis & Clark Law School**

My name is Aliza Kaplan. I am a law professor and the Director of the Criminal Justice Reform Clinic at Lewis & Clark Law School.

Over my 25 years of practicing law, I have almost exclusively represented people in prison or those who are formerly incarcerated. The majority of my clients have committed very serious crimes and have spent many years, sometimes decades, in prison. Because of their very hard work and the classes and programs available to them while in prison, I am fortunate to say that so many of them are rehabilitated, transformed, and take accountability. Many years after their crimes, they simply are not the same people they were at the time of their crimes.

Crucial to Adults in Custody's (AICs) ability to change while they are incarcerated is their access to educational programs. When I say education, I mean all kinds—literacy support, college courses, and programs on professional, technical and developmental skills. All of types of educational programs help reduce criminal thinking, and increase rehabilitation and public safety while the AICs are inside our prisons but also make a huge difference when they are released; having an education helps them find and keep jobs and decreases recidivism.<sup>1</sup> According to Oregon's Department of Corrections, somewhere between 300-350 AICs are released from our prisons each month—we should want those AICs to go back to their communities, find employment, support their families, and be safe—we should want them to succeed. One way to do this is to provide them with educational opportunities while they are incarcerated.

Unfortunately some of Oregon's prisons lack sufficient educational programs and opportunities for their AIC population and in some others, there are close to no educational programs for those who both need and want them. Because of the many online opportunities available these days, we now have the ability to offer excellent online educational programs to AICs all over the state and we should do it.

HB 2747 will go far in creating educational opportunities for Adults in Custody around the state and help make Oregon's prisons and our communities safer.

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<sup>1</sup> A 2023 meta-analysis on the effects of education programs in prisons, showed that they are a net positive, both for taxpayers and former prisoners. The research shows that providing educational opportunities to incarcerated individuals reduces recidivism and boosts employment and income for participants. Springer, Stickle "Are Education Programs in Prison Worth It?" *American Journal of Criminal Justice* (Oct. 2023).