

## **Endorsement of House Bill 3118: Making Communication Accessible for All**

As someone dedicated to meaningful corrections reform, I wholeheartedly endorse Oregon House Bill 3118. This vital legislation addresses a critical barrier to rehabilitation by ensuring incarcerated Oregonians can maintain connections with their support networks without financial burden. As someone who worked closely with former Ombuds Adrian Wulff on this issue and helped to write the report to the Legislature, "Justice is Calling," I am all too familiar with the issues and would be happy to make myself available for more in-depth questions.

Currently, the exorbitant costs of prison communication fall disproportionately on families already struggling financially. A regular schedule of phone calls can cost a family living paycheck-to-paycheck more than some disposable budgets allow, forcing loved ones to choose between basic necessities and maintaining contact with an incarcerated family member.

The evidence is clear: maintaining family connections significantly reduces recidivism. When incarcerated individuals maintain meaningful relationships with family, friends, and community supports, they're more likely to successfully reintegrate upon release. These connections provide:

- Emotional support during incarceration
- Housing opportunities upon release
- Employment connections and references
- Crucial stability during the transition back to community life

Several states have already implemented similar measures with remarkable success. Connecticut, California, and Colorado have demonstrated that free communication services can be implemented effectively without compromising security while dramatically improving outcomes.

HB 3118 recognizes that communication is not a luxury—it's a necessity for rehabilitation. By removing financial barriers to calls, video visits, and text messaging, Oregon can strengthen family bonds, improve mental health outcomes for those incarcerated, and ultimately create safer communities through successful reintegration.

I urge Oregon legislators to pass HB 3118 and recognize that investing in human connection is investing in public safety.

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