



Testimony in support of HB 3118

Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Justice Advocates is a grassroots group in the Portland area that promotes criminal justice reforms, and we members of Justice Advocates strongly support HB 3118, for free phone calls and other communication services for prisoners in Oregon DOC facilities.

Supportive communications with loved ones, both family and friends, is very important for the well-being of incarcerated people, and maintaining these connections also can play a positive role in successful reentry back into the community after incarceration. But the high cost of communication can be a huge financial burden for those who want to keep in touch with an incarcerated loved one, basically punishing the family and friends!

For a prisoner who has no funds for phone calls and gets few or no visits from family or friends, the time served seems to drag out and they may feel loneliness or depression. To hear a loved one's voice may brighten their day. When worried about a loved one who is ill, just to hear their voice may help relieve the stress. The same goes for their family members or friends who are missing them. A few minutes for a child to hear a parent's voice helps to keep that needed connection.

The financial cost of providing free communication services would be a very small percent of Department of Corrections' overall budget. The DOC will also benefit when this important need of prisoners is met and not dependent on their family's ability to pay for phone calls.

Please vote YES for HB 3118.

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