



Written Testimony in Support of SB 938

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,

My name is Andrea Pacheco, and I serve as the Executive Director of Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to community mediation and restorative justice in rural counties of the mid-Columbia River region, including tribal in-lieu fishing sites.

I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 938. Confidentiality is a fundamental component of restorative justice, particularly in the work we conduct through our *Circles of Peace* program, which receives funding from the Criminal Justice Commission.

The demographic composition of our region is predominantly Caucasian, straight, and cisgender, shaping local culture and social dynamics. As a result, minority groups—including non-Caucasian individuals, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and other historically marginalized populations—often encounter significant barriers to accessing support services. Many of these challenges stem from systemic inequities and historical injustices that continue to affect these communities.

For restorative justice programs like *Circles of Peace* to be effective on a statewide level, participants must have absolute confidence that any personal information shared with government agencies will remain confidential and be used solely for statistical purposes. In many of the rural communities we serve, political polarization is pronounced, and while anti-discrimination laws exist, their enforcement and public awareness vary significantly. This reality discourages some individuals from seeking the support they need. Moreover, longstanding mistrust in government institutions contributes to lower participation rates among minority groups and results in the underreporting of violence.

We are committed to fostering trust and creating safe spaces that promote healing and accountability. Our program has successfully facilitated survivor support circles for Indigenous, Spanish-speaking, and English-speaking crime survivors. These circles have provided profoundly healing experiences for marginalized members of our community.

Trust is a fundamental component of the success of these circles and of all Circles of Peace programming. Maintaining strong confidentiality protections is essential to upholding this trust and ensuring the continued effectiveness of our work.

Also, I strongly support SB 938's provision to fund the statewide restorative justice coalition. This coalition plays a vital role in ensuring that restorative justice programs across Oregon can collaborate, share best practices, and continuously improve their services.

Finally, I want to underscore the critical importance of stable funding for restorative justice programs. Six Rivers is a small nonprofit organization, and the Circles of Peace program is currently in its pilot year following a comprehensive planning and design phase. To effectively



establish our presence within the community and provide essential restorative services to those in need, long-term financial stability is imperative.

I respectfully urge the committee to support SB 938 to safeguard the integrity of restorative justice initiatives and ensure that individuals impacted by crime have access to meaningful pathways for resolution and healing.

For more information about our *Circles of Peace* program, please visit 6rivers.org.

Thank you for your time and for your dedication to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Andrea Pacheco
Executive Director
Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center