



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Zach Hudson, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

Subject: House Bill 3066

Chair Hudson and members of the committee, my name is Larry Bennett, and I serve as Assistant Director of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) Correctional Services Division. I am providing written testimony on House Bill (HB) 3066.

What the Bill Does:

HB 3066 would appropriate \$180,135 to the DOC for the purpose of funding an advanced esthetics vocational training program at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF).

Background:

DOC first collaborated with Portland Community College (PCC) to create an advanced esthetics program within the existing cosmetology program at CCCF. DOC and PCC purchased equipment, and area section within the cosmetology program area was converted to meet the new program needs. In addition, PCC invested in additional training for the program coordinator to become a licensed advanced esthetics instructor.

During the launch of the program in 2018-2019, four students were trained, all of whom successfully completed and became certified advanced estheticians. During the 2018-2019 program year training period, nearly 15,000 services were provided to nearly 200 individuals; and in 2019 a memorandum of understanding was established between DOC, PCC, the Oregon Health Licensing Authority, and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

Despite its early success, however, the advanced esthetics program, along with many others, was suspended during COVID. The suspension was extended in fiscal year 2022-23 because DOC's education programs budget allocation could no longer support the program.

Impacts:

Addition of this program could create opportunities for up to eight (8) more adults in custody (AICs) per year to participate in a vocational training program. In addition, the skills learned and services provided through the training program include tattoo removal, scar reduction, and many other services that would have a secondary benefit to hundreds of other individuals by helping them prepare for a more successful transition and return to their community.

Space for new programs and activities at CCCF is limited. However, the staffing, equipment, instructional space, and MOU from the program's start remain in place. Therefore, other than funding, this program would not require any additional DOC resources, including space.

DOC would contract with the Portland Community College to provide the advanced esthetics work-based education training and certification program at CCCF. Research has shown engaging in education and vocational training programs during incarceration is effective in reducing the risk of recidivism. This funding would provide approximately 16 people per biennium the opportunity to engage in a training and certification program designed to not only ease their transition back into the workforce upon release, but to also be able to engage in meaningful and gainful employment.

Thank you for your time. I am available to answer any questions you may have.

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