

Submitter: Audrey Bailey
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Public Safety
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5004

Dear committee, thank you sincerely for your time and service on Ways and Means,

I am writing today to illustrate the powerful impact of the Department of Correction's transition coordinators have in our community and urge you to vote yes on the Ways and Means POP package that includes funding for additional transition coordinators. This is a small request that will have a tremendous impact on so many lives.

As the Community Education Director at Oregon State Credit Union, we have a partnership with the DOC transition coordinators who teach two classes of our financial education curriculum on a rolling basis to those preparing for re-entry. I have seen the immense impact this has had for those exiting the correctional system. The comments these participants give clearly demonstrate that the transition coordinators make these classes not only enjoyable, but also a safe space to learn and ask questions. They also help the participants see how these classes are relevant to their success on the outside. The transition coordinator's professionalism and expertise working with this population is invaluable and they need the additional support of more team members to continue this impactful work for more facilities.

To illustrate, I want to share some of the voices of those preparing for re-entry who have taken the money management courses from the transition coordinators:

"This class was more than I expected and very beneficial. I knew some of the information previous, but this class gave a broader perspective on managing money more. [Transition coordinator's name] is a great instructor and I appreciate her and DOC for the information."

"This [class] info was very helpful. I learned a lot. I look forward to using this info in starting my new successful life upon release from prison... I learned a lot of stuff I didn't know."

"The class and the teacher's instructions were very helpful. I really appreciate the purpose, intention, and availability of such a class ... having a good paying job and some money and the ability to be independent is the stuff that men can be proud of and strive to hold on to and stay out of prison. It's so obvious, but I appreciate what y'all are doing. Thank you so much!"

Frequently, participants will mention that they are grateful for these classes because

they've been incarcerated for 10, 15, or 20+ years. Re-entry is not only a dramatic change due to the changed environment they are coming back to, but they are also likely dealing with natural changes within as we all do as we grow, age, and mature.

Education and support for life skills, two things that many of these participants remark they didn't have access to prior to their incarceration, are provided by the transition coordinators with care and make a real difference in our community. It goes without saying that providing this support is not only the right thing to do for rehabilitation, it is also saving the state money in the long run by helping folks proudly stand on their own feet once released.

Thank you sincerely for your time and for demonstrating your commitment to healthier communities by voting yes on this package.

Audrey Bailey