

Honorable Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans and Members of the committee, I'm Elle Harris from Harris Excavation, here to strongly support House Bill 5004. As a volunteer and mentor at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility's heavy equipment program, I've witnessed the transformative power of vocational training firsthand.

Consider this: 58% of incarcerated women and 47% of incarcerated men are parents. By supporting their rehabilitation, we're not just helping them—we're investing in their children's futures and breaking cycles of incarceration that trap 40% of these adults due to generational exposure to parents in and out of the system.

Funding vocational training isn't just our moral duty; it's a smart investment in Oregon's future. It equips individuals with skills, reduces re incarceration rates, strengthens our workforce, and builds safer communities. This isn't only about those serving time today—it's about our children, siblings, or grandkids who might stumble tomorrow. We're all human, all imperfect.

Suicide Rates double for those who have gotten out of incarceration compared to the general public. I believe this to be due to the hardships of even non violent and non person to person crimes on their record preventing them from obtaining decent paying jobs and housing. Research also shows those who overcome hardships are 86% more likely to be dedicated members of their communities because they feel a deep emotional need to get involved and make real change.

People ask when will it be enough for me. My answer? When we've dismantled the obstacles keeping willing hardworking people from decent jobs and stable housing that want to put in the work. When we have dismantled the obstacles for a mother or father to be able to be a provider to their children and a full time parent again.

We can not cut these essential programs now, we need to increase the programs and continuing building on the efforts that have been already in place that will show the true impact for years to come. We must put Oregonians first, that means keep fighting—for them, their families, and Oregon's future. For those who have stumbled in the past, present and future.

Thank you for your time,

Elle Harris
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