

To: Public Safety Subcommittee of Joint Ways and Means

Date: April 2, 2025

Re: Support for HB 5005 & the Restorative Justice Grant Program

Dear Co-Chairs, Broadman and Evans, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Theresa Huggins, and I am the Program Manager of the Portland Community Justice Partnership, a restorative justice initiative of Lutheran Community Services Northwest. Our program works in collaboration with the Portland Police Bureau and other community partners to provide restorative justice processes and training in the Multnomah County area. I am writing to urge you to fully fund the Restorative Justice Grant Program within the Criminal Justice Commission budget.

The Restorative Justice Grant Program has been instrumental in expanding restorative justice services across Oregon. **Without this critical funding, many programs—including ours—risk losing momentum or being forced to reduce services that provide survivors with meaningful pathways to healing, accountability, and justice outside of the traditional legal system.**

Through our work, we have witnessed firsthand the profound impact of restorative justice. Our program facilitates structured dialogue processes that allow those responsible for harm to take accountability and actively work toward meaningful repair. In a recent case, a victim shared, “We achieved a better outcome than we would have through a traumatizing court process. This service cost us nothing, yet it provided more than an expensive attorney ever could—understanding, empathy, and peace.” These are the kinds of resolutions that promote true healing and strengthen community safety.

Restorative justice is not just about addressing individual cases—it is a cost-effective, research-supported approach that strengthens communities, reduces recidivism, and provides crime survivors with an active role in the justice process. Studies consistently show that victims who participate in restorative justice processes report higher satisfaction rates, while responsible parties gain a deeper understanding of the impact of their actions, decreasing the likelihood of reoffending.

Funding for restorative justice is an investment in Oregon’s future. The Restorative Justice Grant Program has allowed communities across the state to build and expand innovative

alternatives to incarceration that prioritize healing and accountability. We urge you to continue supporting this vital work by allocating \$8 million to the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program and ensuring its stability in the state budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to supporting restorative approaches that strengthen Oregon's public safety system.

Sincerely,

Theresa Huggins, MSCR

Program Manager, Portland Community Justice Partnership

Lutheran Community Services Northwest