

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and members of the committee,

My name is Laura Diamond, and I am the Restorative Justice Program Coordinator and co-owner of Conflict Artistry LLC. **I am writing in support of the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program and I am asking this committee to allocate \$8 million for the next biennium to this essential program.**

The CJC's Restorative Justice Grant Program provides critical funds for restorative justice programs across the state that center the needs of crime survivors and that keep the community safe by addressing the underlying causes of this harmful behavior, by fostering real accountability for those who have caused harm, and by meaningfully tending to the trauma crime survivors experience. **It is important that this grant program remains funded and that it has stable funding by being included in the Criminal Justice Commission's current service level budget.**

Funding restorative justice is important because...

- Restorative justice provides victims and survivors with a valuable option for healing and accountability.
- Restorative justice is an effective public safety approach that supports community integration.
- Oregon needs more approaches to harm that do not involve incarceration or conviction.
- Restorative justice promotes community, public safety, and healing for survivors of harm.
- There are strong benefits for everyone involved: the survivor, the person responsible for the harm, and the broader community.
- Community based alternatives to prosecution are dramatically less expensive than the current system.
- Developing community based alternatives is important for addressing the unrepresented crisis and reducing the burden on our court system.
- Restorative justice empowers people to acknowledge, take responsibility for and work towards repairing the harm they caused. This leads to true accountability and reduced recidivism.
- There is a strong interest in restorative justice alternatives across the entire state of Oregon. Both urban and rural areas of Oregon are benefiting from the CJC's Restorative Justice Grant Program.

Although our collective includes facilitators all over Oregon, I personally live in Eugene and primarily serve Lane County with our direct-action restorative justice process. I do restorative justice work, because I see firsthand everyday how necessary and meaningful it is to my

communities. I have seen how our restorative justice process transforms both individuals and their communities. It promotes healthy relationships and communication in ways that will prevent the kind of harms that occurred in the past. We have even had multiple individuals involved in our cases move on to get restorative justice training themselves, so that they can bring this alternative to their communities.

In 2021, we founded our collective and took on one of our first cases. The participant who initiated that case shared with us that they found immense healing in the process; they are now a member of our Coordinating Team, helping use restorative justice to address sexual harm and intimate partner violence.

By educating Oregon communities on restorative justice and providing an alternative option, our program has moved individuals to consider a non-system alternative to responding to harm in their communities. This is all thanks to the Restorative Justice Grant Program.

To date, the Oregon legislature has invested \$8 million to support fifteen restorative justice programs. Approximately half of these programs have received funding since the Restorative Justice Grant Program's first application cycle in July of 2022. The other half are new programs, which received planning grants for the beginning of 2025 to develop the concept for their pilot programs. These 15 programs span a significant portion of the state, serving 17 different counties with our program, Conflict Artistry LLC, accepting cases from anywhere in the state.

In 2024, the legislature invested \$4 million in the CJC's Restorative Grant Program for a one-year period, with the possibility of a three-month extension for established programs. \$2.7 million went to continue the seven established programs with \$1.3 million distributed to eight new programs seeking to expand access to restorative justice to other communities around the state. Based on these numbers, it is evident that an increased allocation is necessary to support the continued growth of the established programs and to provide an opportunity for the planning grant programs to move into their pilot stage. **I am requesting that you recognize the importance of these programs and the value they lend to Oregon's public safety system by allocating \$8 million to the Criminal Justice Commission's Restorative Justice Grant Program and by including this grant program in the CJC's current service level budget.**

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider keeping the Restorative Justice Grant Program in the budget this fiscal year. Oregon has been a leader in supporting restorative approaches to harm. Please keep us moving in the right direction by investing \$8 million in these healing and transformative programs.

Sincerely,

Laura Diamond