



OREGON'S WOMEN IN PRISON CONFERENCE TO FOCUS ON SENTENCING THIS MONTH

CONTACT: Alice Lundell, Director of Communication, Oregon Justice Resource Center, at alice@ojrc.org/503-563-3356/503-781-1405

October 4, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PORTLAND, Oregon – An annual conference that aims to educate the community about issues affecting justice-involved women in Oregon returns to Portland this October 15th and 16th. The Women in Prison Conference is organized by the Oregon Justice Resource Center and takes place at Lewis & Clark Law School. Its goal is to provide training and discussion opportunities to lawyers, social workers, counselors, prison volunteers, formerly incarcerated women and others.

Each year, a different theme is chosen for the conference, with this year's being sentencing and mandatory minimums.

“We decided to focus on sentencing and mandatory minimums because we recognize that there's a lot of confusion out there about how sentencing in Oregon actually works,” said Julia Yoshimoto, Director of the Women in Prison Project for the Oregon Justice Resource Center. “At a time when Oregon may face the prospect of opening a second women's facility due to overcrowding, it makes sense to be talking about how our sentencing practices have contributed to the growth in the women's prison population.”

Highlights of this year's conference include in-depth presentations on two of Oregon's best-known ballot measures affecting sentencing laws. Measures 11 and 57 created mandatory minimum sentences and harsher penalties for certain crimes. This has contributed to an increase in women's average length of stay in prison and therefore to growth in the women's prison population.

The conference will also receive an update on Oregon's Family Sentencing Alternative Pilot Program (FSAPP). This pilot project operating in five counties allows eligible defendants who are parents to be sentenced to probation rather than prison. The goal is to improve outcomes for families and save money by cutting the costs associated with incarceration and placing children

in foster care. FSAPP is one of the measures that it's hoped will help to reduce Oregon's women's prison population enough to delay or prevent opening a second women's unit.

Finally, the conference will conclude with a look at the future of women's incarceration in Oregon and, in particular, what can be done to avoid prison expansion.

"Opening a second women's unit would be a defining moment for Oregon," said Yoshimoto. "It would require huge expense and would essentially be an acceptance of the seemingly unstoppable growth in the women's prison population. At our conference, we will discuss the alternatives we've identified that can help prevent this from happening."

Tickets for the conference are still available and cost \$35, including some meals and snacks. There is no charge for formerly incarcerated people to attend. More information and tickets – as well as a full schedule – are available at <http://ojrc.info/women-in-prison-conference>.

###

Event Details

Dates: October 15-16
Times: Saturday 8.30am – 5pm and Sunday 9am – 1.30pm
Location: Lewis & Clark Law School, 10015 SW Terwilliger Blvd., Portland, OR 97219
Tickets: \$35 including some meals and snacks, free for formerly incarcerated people
Website: Visit <http://ojrc.info/women-in-prison-conference> for more information, full schedule, and tickets

For more information or interviews, or to arrange a free media pass for the conference please contact Alice Lundell.