

For Immediate Release

Monday, February 2, 2010

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Kevin Mannix Uses Fear Mongering to Force Legislator's Hands

Yesterday, Mannix's group, the Oregon Anti-Crime Alliance, released radio ads designed to scare the public as a tactic to influence public policy. Mannix's radio ads suggests that a modest earned-time increase that is part of HB 3508 (the Safety and Savings Act) will be responsible for increased crime.

"Mannix wants to scare the public and policymakers into rolling back smart public safety policy" says David Rogers, Executive Director of Partnership for Safety and Justice. "We should be using facts, not fear, to figure out the best approach to public safety policy."

The legislature was facing a projected \$4 billion deficit last year and the Safety and Savings Act (HB 3508) was designed to protect cuts to critical public safety agencies and programs. The law implemented a number of policies that have been proven to save money while reducing recidivism and future crime.

In 2008, a Pew report (*1 in 100: Behind Bars in America*) highlighted Oregon as spending a greater percentage of its general fund budget on prisons than any other state in the country. In January of 2010, another report by the National Association of State Budget Officers ranked Oregon as spending the second highest percentage of its general fund on corrections. With Oregon facing significant revenue shortfalls, the state needs to better prioritize expenditures in all areas of the budget, including public safety.

"Being ranked first or second in corrections spending is nothing for Oregonians to brag about," says Rogers. "It doesn't bode well for our future when we are one of just a handful of states that spends more on prisons than on higher education and community colleges combined."

Mannix is taking aim at the part of the Safety and Savings Act that created a modest 10% increase in eligible earned-time for about a third of the prison population. This 10% increase amounts to an average early release of about 50 days and is subject to the review and objection of prosecutors, victims, and judges. Over 700 people have been denied access to the additional earned-time because the review process has been thorough.

Earned-time is a policy that allows some reduction in criminal sentences when inmates are working hard to transform themselves by participating in rehabilitation programs and behaving well. Significant studies of earned-time from around the country show the policy is a smart corrections management tool, saves money, promotes rehabilitation, and can reduce future crime.

“Honestly, Mannix’s scare and spend tactics are appalling,” says Rogers. “Mannix promotes the politics of fear in order to promote out-dated policies that have Oregon leading the nation in prison spending.”

Kevin Mannix has a long history of promoting scare and spend prison-building policies. In 2008, he sponsored Measure 61 which the state estimated would have cost over \$2 billion for prison construction alone. Measure 61 attempted to create a new mandatory minimum sentencing scheme for addiction driven crime while creating no new investments for addiction treatment. Measure 61 was rejected by Oregon voters.

The law Mannix is opposing created roughly \$50 million in savings from the reduced need for prison beds and then re-invested that money to keep state police on the job, ensure crime labs were functioning, sustain juvenile justice facilities, protect addiction treatment, and strengthen domestic and sexual violence services.

The Safety and Savings Act was supported by a broad alliance of organizations called the Promise of Measure 57 Coalition that believes Oregon needs to shift toward a smarter approach to public safety spending. The Coalition includes a wide range of organizations from the Oregon Business Association, Stand for Children, Partnership for Safety and Justice, Human Services Coalition of Oregon, the Oregon Association of Mental Health Programs, and many more.