

# Mid-Year Legislative Update

July 2021

Central City Concern's [policy agenda for 2021](#) is focused on improving access to housing, health care, economic resiliency and social connectedness for people impacted by poverty, homelessness and complex health needs. We also advocated for reforms to the criminal and legal systems that have long perpetuated barriers to health and housing stability. When evaluating what bills we would support during the 2021 legislative session, we looked for bills and coalition partnerships that prioritized equity and anti-racism.

Below is a summary of bills we advocated for this session. Nearly all the legislation we supported was passed into law, and we were also able to secure key investments in CCC services. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the advocacy work this session. We also greatly appreciate the leadership of the state elected officials who represent CCC properties and programs. Thank you Representatives Dexter, Reynolds, Nosse, Sanchez, Speaker Kotek, Smith Warner, Pham, Valderrama, Reardon and Ruiz and Senators Steiner Hayward, Burdick, Taylor, Frederick, Dembrow, Jama and Gorsek.

## CCC Priority Bills Passed

- [SB 291](#) – Changes some housing screening regulations for market and most affordable housing providers, including:
  - Disallowing denial of an application based on arrests that did not lead to convictions.
  - Stipulating that before denying a housing application based on criminal history, a landlord must conduct an individualized assessment and provide the opportunity for the applicant to submit supplemental material.
- [HB 2086](#) – Implements recommendations from the Governor's Behavioral Health Advisory Council, co-chaired by our CEO Rachel Solotaroff, which included:
  - Enhanced payments and removing administrative barriers for providing co-occurring disorder mental health and substance use disorder treatment
- [HB 2508](#) – Makes telehealth, including phone-only appointments, permanently covered by insurance providers. Extends the flexibilities and regulations that made telehealth expansion possible during COVID-19 to be the new standard even after the state of emergency is lifted.
- [HB 2981](#) – Creates a palliative care payment structure and program regulations to ensure CCOs are providing palliative care to OHP patients.
- [HB 2172](#) – Expands "earned discharge" for people on parole, probation and post-prison supervision. Earned discharge is a way for people to reduce the amount of time they have to be on supervision after being released from incarceration. We know being on supervision can perpetuate barriers to housing and employment for those that are meeting the requirements of their release. Earning this reduction in supervision time can speed up their path to long-term stability.
- [SB 397](#) – Reforms Oregon's expungement process by shortening wait times from 10-20 years to 3-7 years. It allows for expungement of arrests that did not lead to conviction and eliminates most of the current fees associated with applying for relief (except a one-time fee for a fingerprint record check which cannot be more than the actual cost of the record check). Old records hold people back from meeting their goals. By creating a shorter wait

period and eliminating fees, expungement will be more accessible and better support people in maintaining their new successful path forward.

- **SB 620** – Eliminates supervision fees charged after someone is released from prison. Complying with supervision can come with a lot of requirements. Putting the cost of supervision on people recently released from prison perpetuates poverty and economic instability at a time when people need the most support to gaining economic independence.
- **HB 3352** – Covering All People. This bill expands eligibility for the Oregon Health Plan to include people whose income qualifies for Medicaid, but currently are not able to be enrolled based on their documentation status. Passage of this bill will allow Oregon to break down a major barrier to health care access for people who have recently immigrated to Oregon and the United States.

## **Budget Investments**

CCC will receive \$4.8 million of American Rescue Plan Act investment to expand clinical respite with transitional housing. This expansion opportunity reflects the years of amazing service provided by the Recuperative Care Program and the deep need in community to avoid hospital discharges to homelessness.

The state made historic investments in health care and housing. The state will spend \$1.021 billion in behavioral health and nearly \$700 million in housing development and preservation. Some key investments included:

- \$15 million for planning for statewide crisis intervention centers and mobile teams
- \$80 million for recruitment, expansion and retention of a behavioral health workforce
- \$302 million in marijuana revenues will go to the implementation of Measure 110
- \$19.3 million to implement new services now covered under OHP for substance use disorders including housing navigation, employment and case management
- \$30 million for land or building acquisition to develop and preserve “naturally occurring” affordable housing
- \$410 million for Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) and Permanent Supportive Housing
- \$100 million for preservation of existing affordable housing

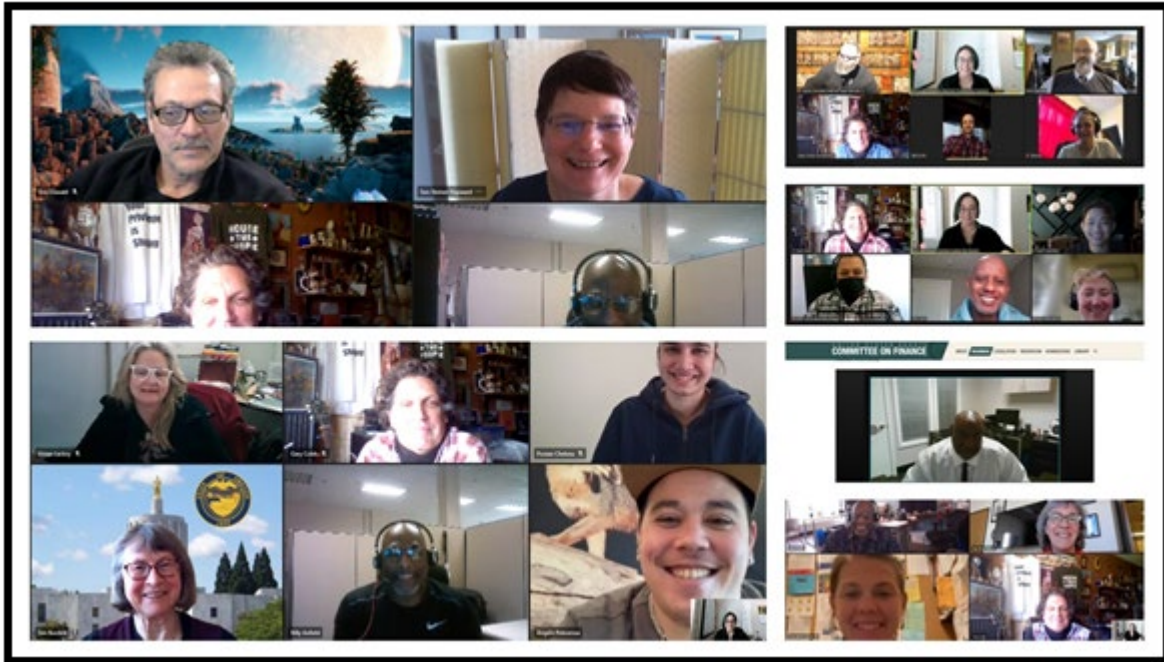
## **CCC Priority Bill Not Passed**

**HB 2002** – CCC joined a large coalition of community organizations to support this large comprehensive justice transformation bill. This bill would have reformed multiple elements of the criminal and legal system, from arrest and stops to reentry services. It would have addressed mandatory minimums, training and accountability for law enforcement across the spectrum. We are deeply disappointed that this legislation was not able to pass this session, especially after all the community calls for large scale reform. However, we were able to see some of the components of this bill passed through HB 2172 and SB 620 thanks to the advocacy and leadership of Flip the Script. CCC will continue to participate in this coalition in the coming years as we bring these reforms back and continue to demand action.

## **Other Impactful Bills Passed**

- **HB 2469** – Creates mental health wellness appointments to be covered under OHP (similar to primary care physical health check-ups).
- **HB 3026** – Creates a fee waiver for state ID cards (including first issuance, renewals and up to two replacements) for people experiencing homelessness. IDs are required for applying for jobs, housing and even many social services. The cost of an ID card is as high as \$44.50, with renewals and replacements costing almost as much. Removing this financial barrier for people struggling will support better connections to housing, jobs and services.

- **HB 3229** – Creates an advisory council at the Criminal Justice Council of Oregon to establish guidelines for continuity of care for people transitioning into and out of incarceration. This will be an ongoing body of work to improve health care standards at local correctional facilities. People who are incarcerated in Oregon are 3-6 times more likely to be OHP members who experience mental health or substance use challenges, or both.
- **HB 3035** – Establishes a health navigator pilot program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Continuity of care for people transitioning in and out of incarceration has been deeply lacking. This is an important step toward using a health care approach within the criminal and legal systems.



**THANK YOU to all the CCC advocates who contributed to this work!**

Even with all the stress of the last year, a record number of CCC staff turned out to engage in advocacy this session. We are incredibly grateful to have had over 400 signatures on five different staff letters addressing key bills, which included over 70 unique comments from staff sharing stories of impact. We had 17 staff attend 14 meetings with legislators and their staff, as well as five staff and four clients provide testimony at committee meetings.

Now that the session is over, we will begin to work on implementation of these new policies. We will also be inviting legislators for follow-up meetings this summer. We hope you will continue to contribute your experiences and knowledge to advocate for the change we need.