

## Crime

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look on how we're spending our public safety dollars. Let's begin with a focus on victims' services, re-entry programs and substance abuse treatment.

"In my view we should all be focused on shifting our public safety spending to prevention-based strategies, such as victims' services, addiction treatment and recovery, and re-entry programs," she said. "After all last year 4500 inmates were released from prison. Where are they all going? Are we taking care of them and making sure they aren't going to be back in prison in six months?"

"Evidence-based law enforcement strategies, prison programs, including mental health treatment and vocational programming: We need to prepare people to succeed when they return to the community. We need to help people rejoin society and not live a lifetime on the fringe."

Rosenblum defeated Dwight Holton in the Democratic primary election. She was appointed by Gov. Kitzhaber to serve out the term of AG John Kroger, who resigned June 29 and is now president of Reed College. Rosenblum will face Republican AG nominee, James Buchal, in the November election.

About 60 people attended the Partnership for Safety and Justice event. The group brings together victims of crime, people who have committed crimes, and their fam-

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ilies, to advocate for a prevention-focused approach to public safety.

The group has just launched a new campaign, Stand Strong for Safety and Savings, which will seek to end mandatory minimum sentences, give judges more discretion, and



Portland's high school football season kicked off its second week with a cross-town rivalry game between Jefferson and Grant at Grant High School. The game was disappointing for Jeff fans, whose team lost by 58-12. Next games are Sept. 14: Lincoln goes to Westview (7:30p.m.); Sunset plays at Grant (7 p.m.); Banks plays Benson at Marshall (7 p.m.); Franklin plays at Wilson (7 p.m.); Madison plays at Jefferson (7 p.m.); and Roosevelt plays at Cleveland (7 p.m.)

re-focus spending on programs that have been proved to reduce offending, such as prevention and after-prison programs.

PSJ also seeks to mandate that young people are placed in youth facilities not in adult jails. Some counties, for example, Multnomah and Clackamas, already have this policy, but in other parts of the state, youth routinely end up in adult prisons.

"We have an incredible opportunity in the next 10 months to pass historic changes to the criminal justice system, David Rogers, PSJ's executive director, told supporters. "We could begin to see a much smarter approach to reducing victimization and crime."

National research by the Pew Center has looked at the costs and benefits of lengthy sentences. "Time Served: the High Cost, Low Return of Longer Prison Terms," crunched numbers from across the country and found prison sentences have increased by 36 percent. Longer sentences have contributed to the decline in crime during the 1990's, the report says, and probably can be credited for between a quarter and a third of the

## It's the Season

drop.

"But criminologists and policy makers increasingly agree that we have reached a 'tipping point' with incarceration, where additional imprisonment will have little if any effect on crime," according to the report.

"Research clearly shows there is little return on public dollars for locking up low-risk offenders for increasingly long periods of time and, in the case of certain non-violent offenders, there is little return on locking them up at all."

The report notes that the 17 states which have cut prison sentences also have seen crime fall. And the researchers point out that we now have evidence-based programs that prevent and reduce criminal behavior.

"...there are more effective, less expensive ways to handle non-violent offenders than lengthy spells of incarceration..."

Efforts to rein in costs and reduce the negative effects of prison, which can include increased criminal behavior, have brought together policymakers from across the political spectrum. Republicans, Sen. Jackie Winters and Rep. Andy Olson sit on Oregon's Commission on Public Safety along-

side Democrats, Sen. Floyd Prozanski and Rep. Chris Garrett.

Significant opposition is expected, however. Not everyone agrees that reducing prison sentences is necessary and safe. Steve Doell, a co-founder of Crime Victims United and the Anti-Crime Alliance, which helped create Measure 11 and Measure 57, has created a new group called The "Truth in Sentencing Project." Doell's group has launched a radio campaign in support of current sentencing policy.

The ad says that 70 percent of people in Oregon prisons are there for, "violent crimes and serious sex offenses including felony assault, armed robbery, kidnapping, manslaughter, child molestation, rape, attempted murder, and murder."

A factchecking investigation by Politifact, concluded that 65 percent of people in jail are there for crimes that can automatically be considered violent. That finding, however, draws no distinction between a person who drove a getaway car during a robbery and someone who threatened a cashier with a gun, if both are convicted of robbery.

## Pot

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whether residents can smoke pot, the proponents promise big rewards, though estimates of tax revenue vary widely:

Colorado's campaign touts money for school construction. Ads promote the measure with the tag line, "Strict Regulation. Fund Education." State analysts project somewhere between \$5 million and \$22 million a year. An economist whose study was funded by a pro-pot group projects a \$60 million boost by 2017.

Washington's campaign promises to devote more than half of marijuana taxes to substance-abuse prevention, research, education and health care. Washington state analysts have produced the most generous estimate of how much tax revenue legal pot could produce, at nearly \$2 billion over five years.

Oregon's measure, known as the Cannabis Tax Act, would devote 90 percent of recreational marijuana proceeds to the state's general fund. Oregon's fiscal analysts haven't even guessed at the total revenue, citing the many uncertainties inherent in a new marijuana market. They have projected prison savings between \$1.4 million and \$2.4 million a year if marijuana use was legal without a doctor's recommendation.

"We all know there's a market for marijuana, but right now the profits are all going

to drug cartels or underground," said Brian Vicente, a lawyer working for Colorado's Campaign To Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol.

But there are numerous questions about the projections, and since no state has legalized marijuana for anything but medical purposes, the actual result is anyone's

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guess.

Among the problems: No one knows for certain how many people are buying black-market weed. No one knows how demand would change if marijuana were legal. No one knows how much prices would drop, or even what black-market pot smokers are paying now, though economists generally use a national estimate of \$225 an ounce based on self-reported prices compiled online.

"It's difficult to size up a market even if it's legal, certainly if it's illegal," said Jeffrey Miron, a Harvard University economist who has studied the national tax implications of the legalization of several drugs.

In Colorado, the \$60 million figure comes from Christopher Stiffler, an economist for the nonpartisan Colorado Center on Law &

Policy. He looked at the state's potential marijuana market in a study funded by the pro-legalization Drug Policy Alliance. The figure comes from a combination of state and local taxes and projected savings to law enforcement.

Marijuana smokers and dealers, he argued, pay a premium now because the drug is illegal, and if government can find a way to capture that excess, tax collections should rise.

"You can basically take advantage of economies of scale, and the price of marijuana will go down and government can come in and capture the difference," Stiffler said.

The biggest unknown: Would the federal government allow marijuana markets to materialize?

When California voters considered marijuana legalization in 2010, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder warned that the federal government would not look the other way and allow a state marijuana market in defiance of federal drug law. Holder vowed a month before the election to "vigorously enforce" federal marijuana prohibition. Voters rejected the measure.

Holder hasn't been as vocal this year, but that could change. In early September, nine former heads of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration called on Holder to issue similar warnings to Colorado, Oregon and Washington.

That political uncertainty could translate into states spending thousands of dollars to defend the laws, critics say.

"I think it's important that this ballot lay out for the voters how much litigation is going to result from this," said Colorado assistant Attorney General Michael Dougherty, a critic of the legislation.