



# Oklahoma Conference of Churches

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**March 23, 2011**

**Dear Senator:**

**I am writing you on behalf of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches IMPACT Committee. Our purpose is to analyze pending legislation theologically and attempt to discern God's will. We have adopted theological statements in 5 different areas to guide our contemplation. These statements have also been affirmed by the leaders of the member faith communions.**

**My particular area is Criminal Justice and Corrections. A copy of the statement is attached. In light of that statement and after responsible deliberation we are writing to ask your support for 2 bills.**

**The first is H.B. 2131. Our statement emphasizes restoration of offenders and policies which encourage persons to make positive changes and a parole process that is attractive to offenders and preserves public safety by providing supervision and increasing the possibility of meeting basic life needs of released offenders. We also support alternatives to imprisonment as being more restorative. Community sentencing is mentioned in particular. Since H.B. 2131 provides for more diversion by widening community sentencing, making non-violent offender parole more accessible, interpreting sentences in a manner more likely to encourage positive change, encouraging change by widening release opportunities through GPS and making the parole board qualifications more professional, the bill seems consistent in every respect with our theological statement. We urge your support.**

**The second bill we find consistent with our statement is H.B. 1197 creating the Children of Incarcerated Parents Task Force. I have personally been in ministry to these children for many years. Restorative Justice seeks to address harm. These children certainly have serious needs. Since they become incarcerated at much higher rates than other children as adults, public safety is enhanced if some of their serious needs can be addressed early. We urge your support.**

**Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.**

**Shalom,**

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African  
Methodist  
Episcopal

African  
Methodist  
Episcopal Zion

Christian  
Church  
(Disciples of  
Christ)

Christian  
Methodist  
Episcopal

Cooperating  
Baptist  
Fellowship of  
Oklahoma

Cumberland  
Presbyterian

Episcopal

Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church in  
America

Mennonites

Presbyterian  
Church USA

Progressive  
Oklahoma  
Baptist State  
Convention

Reformed  
Church  
in America

Roman Catholic

Society of  
Friends

United Church  
of Christ

United  
Methodist