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Senate Bill 417 requires correction officers to report inmate abuse. It outlines a process to do so. Last year, the Oregonian published a shocking story detailing widespread sexual abuse of inmates at Oregon's Coffee Creek Correction Facility that had lasted for years.¹ Sadly, a few abusive prison workers misused their power over inmates and took advantage of a code of silence among both inmates and workers.²

The extent of this abuse was demonstrated by the state's decision last year to settle with 17 victims in litigation that cost the state over \$1.6 million.³

In response, the Oregonian Editorial Board called on the Oregon Department of Corrections to replace the reigning code of silence with a new culture of accountability.⁴ SB 417 helps answer that call by requiring mandatory reporting by corrections officers and immediate action to separate abused inmates from alleged abusers.

For the vast majority of Oregon's dedicated correctional workers, a mandatory reporting requirement would have no effect because they would have reported suspected abuse by inmates or correctional workers regardless of a mandatory reporting requirement. However, if a correctional officer, under immense stress, or because of callousness, is tempted to abuse his or her power, this Legislation

¹ Les Zaitz, *Abuse of Women Inmates at Oregon's Coffee Creek Prison Goes on for Years*, THE OREGONIAN (April 29, 2012), available at http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2012/04/abuse_of_women_inmates_at_oreg.html.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Oregonian Editorial Board, *Break the Coffee Creek Code that Fosters Inmate Abuse*, THE OREGONIAN (April 30, 2012), available at http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2012/04/break_the_coffee_creek_code.html.

provides a deterrent and adds an additional layer of accountability to protect those who have no place to go for protection

Senate Bill 417 is important because, in Oregon, sexual abuse of prisoners by fellow inmates or correctional workers is unacceptable. We must have a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse in our prisons. America has risen as a Hallmark of a well-run national prison system. It is up to the us, colleagues, to make sure our prisons remain safe and insure that sexual abuse does not happen ever in our prisons.