

House Bill 4045 Testimony, Christine VanOrder, 02-03-2016

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I come to you today to oppose this bill because I feel that our state needs to move away from mandatory minimum sentencing in all forms. Even though the incarceration time suggested by this bill is relatively short, will it stay short? Is it possible for this bill to one day become a way to impose, say, a five year sentence?

I feel that the recent high profile case involving the Hammonds out of Harney County was a wake-up call for many that we need to rethink mandatory minimums in general. Some of the same people who support Measure 11 and oppose any type of reform are now decrying the five mandatory, day for day with no good time, years that the Hammonds were given.

We can't do anything about the Federal system, but Oregon doesn't need to go down this path again. Once you institute a mandatory minimum sentencing guideline for this, it will be impossible to retract, and there will inevitably be *that one case* that comes up down the road that'll have everybody up in arms—hopefully not literally.

If you want to rely on mandatory minimum sentencing as a way to ensure justice, then you better start building more prisons and expanding county jail space. This is an issue I have a lot of insight on, and I've been to plenty of conferences and informational meetings that prove that our closed custody facilities are busting at the seams, because they are. We need to get creative to address the criminal justice issues that our state is facing, but more mandatory minimums is not the answer.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christine VanOrder