

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

Thursday, January 31, 2019

Dear Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of the YWCA of Greater Portland, I am writing to express our support for HB 2515 requiring correctional facilities to provide tampons and sanitary napkins to incarcerated females at no cost.

As one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the nation, with 2.6 million members across 300 local associations, the YWCA of Greater Portland has been serving Oregonians for over 110 years, while evolving to meet the changing needs of the women we serve. However, our core mission has not changed: eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, dignity and freedom for all.

One of our five key areas of work is the Oregon Center for Justice Involved Women & Their Children at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, which includes the Family Preservation Project and the Family Resource Center. In our effort to help increase protective factors within families and create self-efficacy in mothers so that they can be successful parents upon re-entry, we see women grapple with a multitude of challenges, including their own health and dignity. Not having access to the basic health necessity of feminine hygiene products can impact their ability to receive services and attend classes or support groups; and the financial burden is a real and urgent issue. Many women involved in the criminal justice system are disproportionately low income and they and their families struggle to keep up with the financial impact of a jail or prison sentence: loss of income, cost of phone calls or written correspondence, and hygiene products ranging from toothpaste to deodorant to tampons. This forces a choice for many women between hygiene and the ability to call their children.

Please ensure that our correctional facilities meet the basic health needs of women in state care. We hope that you will join us in supporting women and families across Oregon by voting yes for HB 2515.

Thank you,



Susan Stoltenberg
CEO, YWCA of Greater Portland

eliminating
empowering
ywca
of greater portland

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