



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Policy Director
In Support of Senate Bill 488 – Flu Shot Access
Senate Judiciary Committee
February 6, 2019**

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon¹ supports Senate Bill 488, which would provide access to an annual flu shot for individuals incarcerated in Oregon prisons and jails. This bill also allows incarcerated individuals the choice of whether to obtain the flu shot, which we believe is an important safeguard to respect autonomy in making health care decisions.

Access to health care in prisons and jails is an issue of utmost importance to our organization. We frequently hear from incarcerated individuals about lack of adequate access to health care and the difficulties it causes in their lives.

In fact, just last year, lack of access to the flu shot in Oregon Department of Corrections facilities was reported on by the Willamette Week. I've submitted a copy of the article along with this testimony. As was stated by our legal director, Mat dos Santos, in the article:

"Denying prisoners basic health care is cruel and unusual punishment. Providing the flu vaccine to all prisoners is a humane and low-cost way for the state to prevent an outbreak and avoid senseless death and suffering. Every prisoner should have access to it—especially during years when the flu has killed thousands of people."

We understand that there is a cost to providing access to flu shots and health care more broadly. At the same time, we also know that flu shots are fairly inexpensive, and preventive care like flu shots saves money in the long run, both in and out of our correctional facilities.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Oregon urges you to support Senate Bill 488. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 45,000 members and supporters statewide.