



FIRST
UNITARIAN OF
PORTLAND
EST. 1866

Rev. Dr. William Sinkford, Senior Minister
Rev. Thomas Disrud, Associate Minister

**Testimony in support of HB 2631
House Committee on Judiciary
Submitted by Reverend Bill Sinkford, Senior Minister
February 13, 2019**

Chair Williamson, Co-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, Members of the Committee,

My name is Reverend Bill Sinkford and I am the Senior Minister at First Unitarian Church of Portland. **I am writing today to express our support for House Bill 2631.**

Our mission at First Unitarian Portland is to create a welcoming community of diverse individuals; to promote love, reason and freedom in religion; to foster lifelong spiritual growth; and to act for social justice. It is our belief that no one is outside the human family and the all are welcome in the beloved community. However, not everyone has the access to the same resources and opportunities for a healthy and productive life.

Through First Unitarian's partnerships with justice impacted communities and organizations, we have learned about the morass of legal issues and the financial inability to get needed legal administrative help or representation facing many incarcerated people. The number of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women who face daunting legal and economic barriers upon reentry is growing. We support innovative programs that offer necessary and stable assistance that support families and communities and that hold up the inherent dignity and worth of all people.

HB 2631 offers an important remedy to women incarcerated in Oregon by providing access to civil legal assistance within Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. This assistance will be invaluable to scores of women by addressing civil legal needs before they leave prison. Upon reentry, their energies and time will be more effectively directed to re-building a positive and healthy life with their families and community.

On behalf of First Unitarian Portland, I ask you to please support HB 2631. Thank you for your consideration.