

To Whom This May Concern,

I am writing to express my concern regarding HB 2959 that will be up for vote this coming Monday in Salem. This bill seeks to criminalize people who are relieving themselves in public, not for fun, not to annoy people. not to be gross, but simply because there is VERY LITTLE ACCESS TO PUBLIC RESTROOMS IN OREGON AND BEYOND. People who are sleeping outside are criminalized at astounding rates, and this criminalization places people in traps in which they are constantly in and out of jail, facing fines they cannot pay, and being slapped with felony charges when they fail to appear in court, often because it's super difficult to make appointments when your entire life is spent trying to survive. This bill is inhumane, and while it is trying to solve a real problem, it is going about it in the most backwards way possible. We do not need more prisons, more laws that will trap people in cycles of poverty and homelessness. We have tried that over and over to no avail. The state of Oregon needs to recognize that we have a humanitarian crisis on our hands, and if we want folks to stop urinating in the street, we need to BUILD solutions to these problems that allow folks access to bathrooms 24/7, for free, and all around our cities. This isn't complicated, but what you all are voting on is CRUEL.