

To: Chair and Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
From: Robert Howell, 1440 Beaumont St. NW, Salem, OR 97304  
Date: February 1, 2020

I am writing to express my support for HB 4121. I believe this bill is critical to fulfilling the State of Oregon's commitment to two things.

First, our state law, reaffirmed by a No vote on Initiative 105 in last year's election, says that our state resources should not be spent on immigration enforcement. By allowing the four county NORCOR jail to be used to imprison immigrants who are being held by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) we are allowing those four counties in the Columbia River Gorge to violate both the letter and the spirit of our law.

Second, our state and local elected leaders and community members have expressed, over and over again, that we believe in restorative justice. The conditions in the jail do not provide for learning opportunities, counseling, or even adequate food for the detainees who are kept there under the NORCOR contract with ICE. Prisoners detained there by ICE have difficulty connecting with family members because they are often moved to The Dalles from communities hundreds of miles away. NORCOR took on this contract simply because the jail needed money and did not have enough funds in the local communities to maintain the local jail services.

It is up to the legislature, with the help of those of in the community who care about the rights of immigrants and the intent of our sanctuary law, to remedy this situation and help the four counties (Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman and Wasco, that share the costs of maintaining NORCOR with resources and new strategies to help meet the needs of the local law enforcement community without relying on money from ICE or violating Oregon's laws.

Sincerely,  
Robert Howell



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