

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 4121**  
**NORCOR COMMUNITY RESOURCES COALITION**

February 3, 2020

**WHO WE ARE**

Residents of Hood River, Gilliam, Wasco Counties

**GOALS**

Terminate NORCOR's contracts with ICE  
Serve as community partners in restorative justice efforts  
Stop using local resources to subsidize ICE activities

**METHODS**

Members of clergy continue to visit detainees weekly, learn their stories, conditions  
Daily picketing at NORCOR 2017-2019 to raise public awareness of issues  
Several individuals filed lawsuit re NORCOR's practices of cooperating with ICE  
Communication and outreach to local elected officials including Hood River City Council and Hood River County Commission, County Commissioners of Wasco, Gilliam and Sherman Counties  
Encouraged election of new county commissioners/NORCOR board members  
Encouraged change in management structure  
Encouraged “no” vote on measure 105, to repeal 1987 sanctuary law  
Reduced picketing 2019-20  
Increased dialog with jail management and board of directors  
Support HB 4121 to provide state funding for NORCOR in order to maintain jail operations and public safety while ending the contract with ICE

**NORCOR BACKGROUND**

Four-county cooperative jail – revenue, management  
No tax base for operations or maintenance  
Revenue and reserves insufficient to meet long term infrastructure, operating needs  
Designed to meet expected Measure 11 needs for more beds  
Overbuilt for needs, with goal of renting beds to reduce local costs  
Not designed for current goals of restorative justice – limited space for programs, education

**WHY ELIMINATE ICE FROM NORCOR**

Oregon voters reaffirmed 1987 sanctuary law by rejecting Measure 105 in 2018

NORCOR is accused of violating that law, lawsuit still in progress \*

NORCOR is the only remaining public jail in Oregon to hold immigrant detainees through a contract with ICE

NORCOR was not designed for long term incarceration (average stay 7-14 days)

As of January 27, at least two ICE detainees have been there most of three years

## **IMPACTS OF LONG TERM DETENTION IN A JAIL SETTING**

### **Health Consequences**

Limited exercise (one hour per day), outdoor time (one hour per week)

Diet high in carbs, fat, salt, sugar; low in fresh foods, fiber

Limited medical care

### **Mental Health Consequences**

Conditions of transport between NORCOR and other facilities can be brutal\*\*

Limited religious services

Limited visitation/iphone/video communications increase isolation from family

Phone, commissary items expensive

No income possibilities working in jail

Personal possessions, clothing tightly controlled

Detainees don't know how long they will be there, when they will be moved

### **Legal Consequences**

Little access to attorneys/legal information

Language barriers and isolation from others = hard to self-represent

People self-deport, despairing of ever getting out of jail

### **Moral Consequences**

Presence of ICE detainees in NORCOR increases fear among immigrant residents

Immigrant fear of interaction with law enforcement reduces crime reporting, impacts public safety

Children of immigrants are vulnerable, insecure: fearful that parents will be taken away

## **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

Support NORCOR operations to ensure public safety while working toward restorative justice  
Pass HB 4121  
End NORCOR's contract with ICE while providing needed funding for our local jail  
Increase safety while decreasing fear in our communities

Signed

Teresa Hepker, The Dalles, Wasco County  
Katie Cook, Condon, Gilliam County  
Sarah Kellems, Hood River, Hood River County

**SOURCES:**

Volunteer clergy and attorneys are allowed face to face visits with detainees at NORCOR. Visits have been conducted weekly for more than two years. Non-confidential data from these interviews inform our understanding of conditions of confinement and how that impacts individuals and families.

\* Case No. 17CV31082, Stovall et al., Plaintiffs vs Northern Oregon Corrections et al., Defendants

\*\*Transport of detainees between facilities is under control of ICE, not local staff.

Detainees have reported being denied heat in ICE transport vehicle during winter for trips of many hours. Transports may occur unannounced at any hour, sometimes leaving before one meal and arriving after another one, depriving the detainee of food for extended periods. Possessions allowed by one facility may be confiscated as contraband by a second one, including items of clothing, commissary items.