



March 9, 2021

House Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for House Bill 3035 and the -1 Amendment

Chair Bynum and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Oregon strongly supports HB 3035 with the -1 Amendment. The ACLU of Oregon is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 28,000 members statewide.

Mass incarceration is a crisis in Oregon and across this country. The ACLU of Oregon continues to advocate for a fundamental shift in our understanding of public safety: from a system that relies on mass incarceration to one that is more just and reinvests in health and wellbeing of all of our communities. The burden of our mass incarceration system is not felt equally across our society, it is disproportionately felt by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. In addition to the racial disparity in the system, an alarming gender disparity exists in our criminal justice system.

Over the last year, we participated in the Gender Responsiveness Workgroup alongside legislators, community-based organizations, and former justice-involved women to discuss the experiences of adults in custody (AICs) at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. In the meetings, we heard first-hand accounts of women and their experience in Oregon prisons, and the stories were both emotional and horrifying.

HB 3035 and the -1 Amendment would fill a critical gap for incarcerated women at the Coffee Creek with a healthcare navigator pilot program and health assessment upon intake. Healthcare navigators would ensure that adults in custody (AICs) have access to medical, mental health, and substance use care and would be an advocate when necessary. The pilot program also would ensure that AICs in Coffee Creek have access to medically appropriate care and are provided the full spectrum of reproductive and gender-affirming care.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen firsthand how vulnerable AICs are and the need for the state to provide better healthcare access and treatment. AICs have a constitutional right to adequate healthcare, under both the Eighth Amendment and the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The pilot program at Coffee Creek as outlined in the -1 Amendment is an impactful and important step forward in protecting these rights.

We applaud Rep Dexter's leadership on HB 3035 and urge the committee to support this pilot program.