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To Whom it may concern,

I am incarcerated in an Oregon prison and am writing to provide a perspective missing from the conversation on the pending bills before the legislature on good time for crimes sentenced under Ballot Measure 11. Oregon prisons are life with violence. Bloody assaults are a daily occurrence. Sometimes they are gang related, other times they are over inane things like who sat at whose dayroom seat. There is nothing more sickening than seeing a 75 year old man in a wheelchair getting double-teamed by two 20 year-olds because he has "bad charges." And not infrequently inmates are beaten to death, as happened last month during an in-cell fight. Violence is the understood language of conflict resolution in prison.

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But it doesn't have to be this way. This culture of brutality persists because there are no consequences that carry any sting. Months in segregation are seen as a badge of honor, and criminal prosecutions simply do not occur even for assaults recorded on videotape (as all are at my institution). In my 8½ years in prison I've not met, nor heard of, a single assault that resulted in new charges. I was personally lit into a year ago by someone whose unit move request had been denied. (He ended up getting his move.) And we all know this—that we reside in a netherworld where, paradoxically, felons can commit felony crimes with impunity. American society would be appalled if they could see inside these walls.

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But there is one thing all prisoners fear: more time added to their sentence. It's noticeable when someone in for murder gets to within five years of a parole hearing—they simply begin to walk away. (I call it *The Curious Case of the Fight that Never Took Place*.)

My neighbor fears it as well, as he was sentenced pre-Measure 11. Any disciplinary infraction and the prison takes away up to 180 days of his earned good time. Over the last 20 years his sentence has been lengthened by three years. Sensibly, he's now a stickler for the rules. But shouldn't we all have this mentality?

Oregon's legislature should pass a bill allowing 20% good time, retroactive, for all crimes (yes, even murder). This would give the segregation hearings officer a heavy weapon to wield that actually bore sting.

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If we all had something to lose, this would change behavior and have a civilizing effect, making prison violence astonishing and exceptional rather than acceptable and commonplace. Almost all of us will be released and one day live amongst you again. Do you really want us moving in next door after a decade of training at gladiator school?

Respectfully,
Bray

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