

House Democratic Leader Barbara Smith Warner, Chair

Representative Julie Fahey, Member

House Republican Leader Christine Drazan, Vice-Chair

Representative Andrea Salinas, Member

Representative Paul Holvey, Vice-Chair

Representative Jack Zika, Member

Representative Daniel Bonham, Member

Oregon House Committee on Rules

Hilary Mar Lopez Nichols, Health Equity Community Organizer

Friday, April 30, 2021

Support for HB 2002

Dear members of the Oregon House Committee on Rules,

I know that you all care about the health of Oregonians, especially in the recent years that have brought us many natural disasters, including wildfires and a pandemic. Because you care about the health of our communities, **I urge you to support HB 2002.**

I serve as the Health Equity Community Organizer at a Federally Qualified Health Center in SE Portland, which means that I work with patient and healthcare leaders to tackle the laws and policies that negatively affect the health of our communities.

Simply put, the current criminal justice and prison systems are bad for health, and particularly health equity. Currently, 2.3 million people are incarcerated in the United States, and people of color are disproportionately represented. Incarcerated people face significant health disparities, including higher rates of chronic diseases, infectious diseases, addiction, and mental illness, and incarceration often exacerbates these health issues. I have had heard too many stories from the patients that I organize with that describe the horrendous impacts the criminal justice system has had on their health, including worsening of mental health conditions, mistreatment in prison because of a disability, and loss of their connection to social supports. Anything we can do to reform our current criminal justice system will have an enormously positive impact on the health of our people.

Developed by a broad coalition of organizations committed to safety, health, and equity, HB 2002 is an expansive public safety reform bill that includes reducing unnecessary stops and arrests, shrinking probation, and investing in victim services and culturally specific services.

Oregon's communities can be safer and stronger with these reforms that shrink our corrections system and invest more equitably in our communities with culturally specific programs, housing, crime survivor services, and addiction treatment.

We have a moral imperative to bring real change to our justice system. Please vote Yes, and urge your colleagues to support HB 2002. Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and for your efforts to manifest a healthier Oregon.

Articles to Support: [I'm Paralyzed From the Collarbone Down, and My Time in Prison Revealed a System That Robs Prisoners of Their Rights and Dignity](#); [Solitary Confinement Is Even Worse for Disabled People](#); [CAGED IN: THE DEVASTATING HARMS OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT ON PRISONERS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES](#)