



Date: April 30, 2021
To: House Committee on Rules
From: Trish Jordan, Executive Director
Re: Support for Transforming Justice 2021, HB 2002

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Drazen, Holvey, and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Trish Jordan and I am the Executive Director and co-founder of Red Lodge Transition Services and a Registered Nurse. Red Lodge Transition Services is a culturally-specific organization whose mission is to prevent incarceration and reduce recidivism among Native Americans.

In Oregon, people of color are targeted, jailed, and imprisoned at disproportionate rates. According to the Department of Justice, Native Americans are incarcerated at a rate 38% higher than the national average. Native Americans are about 2% of the total Oregon population. Red Lodge believes Native Americans in Oregon prisons are undercounted by 20% to 25%. We believe our people represent 5% to 7% of the total prison population.

Systemic racism is enmeshed into our criminal justice system. Many people of color, specifically Native Americans do not trust our judicial system, citing 500 historical years of unfair treatment. Prison did not exist on Turtle Island AKA United States of America, prior to 1491. Traditionally, Native Americans practice restorative justice to correct harm inflicted upon others as well as reduce and prevent unacceptable behavior. Culturally-specific organizations have not had the same opportunities to access criminal justice funds, and as a result, outcomes for communities of color have not been as successful as they could be, in combating incarceration and recidivism.

HB 2002 provides the first opportunity for communities of color to meaningfully engage with the JRI grantmaking process and apply for funds for culturally specific services. Culture is what

shapes us. It influences our beliefs, worldview, foods, clothing, values, and more. Culture is Best Practice for people of color!

Red Lodge picks people up at the prison gates who do not have private transportation. This small gesture of caring which we also view as a community safety measure, is an important step to helping reduce recidivism. People without transportation are released from prison in a grey sweatsuit, all their belongings placed in a clear plastic bag, they are given a sack lunch and one way bus ticket. This is not how we should be sending people home! The first 72 hours are critical to reducing and preventing recidivism.

Who we are, is encoded in our DNA. Native Americans have assimilated, but we will never give up our connection to our Ancestors and cultural practices! We know how our community hurts, and what it takes to heal. We need funding now, and Oregon cannot wait any longer to invest in communities of color.

I urge your support of HB 2002.

Trish Jordan, RN, BSN
Executive Director