



March 29, 2023

To: House Committee on Judiciary

**RE: Testimony in support of HB 2890**

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary

Thank you for the opportunity to share support for HB 2890 on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon). The ACLU of Oregon is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing 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.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen firsthand how vulnerable adults in custody (AIC) 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. HB 2890 is an impactful and important step forward in protecting these rights.

In 2021, the ACLU of OR 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. With Representative Dexter's leadership the workgroup passed HB 3035, which, in part, established the Joint Task Force on Corrections Medical Care and produced a report on the standards of medical care for AICs.

HB 2890 addresses three of the Task Force's recommendations by:

1. Directing the DOC Ombudsman to report staffing and resource needs to the Legislature to effectively oversee DOC;
2. DOC to ensure that all AICs have access to mental health and substance use care that is equivalent to community standards and;
3. Ensuring that AICs have access to personal electronic devices that can aid in communication with family and legal counsel.

**We applaud Rep Dexter's leadership on HB 2890 and her continued commitment to these important issues. The ACLU of OR urges the committee to support HB 2890 and pass it out of committee with a "Do Pass" recommendation.**

Thank you,

Jessica Maravilla  
Policy Director  
ACLU of OR