



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

April 26, 2023

The Honorable Deb Patterson, Chair
Senate Committee on Health Care

Subject: House Bill 2535A

Chair Patterson and members of the committee, my name is Joe Bugher, and I am the Assistant Director of Health Services for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am providing testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 2535A.

What the Bill Does:

HB 2535A requires DOC to establish a doula program for pregnant and postpartum adults in custody at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF). It outlines the requirements of the program and doula services that must be provided to pregnant adults in custody (AICs) and during a one-year postpartum period. It limits use of mechanical restraints on AICs during labor, childbirth, and postpartum recovery in the hospital. It prohibits use of mechanical restraints in a manner that interferes with the postpartum individual's ability to hold or nurse the infant, establish milk supply, obtain lactation support, or receive postpartum recovery care. It requires DOC to use medically appropriate procedures constituting the least restrictive means necessary to ensure safe transport and arrival at a correctional facility following the AIC giving birth to a child at the hospital. Lastly, it directs DOC to develop certain procedures to implement the program and establishes reporting requirements.

DOC is in support of establishing a doula program at CCCF, informed by stakeholder feedback and through listening sessions. DOC currently has a staff position who partners with pregnant AICs on their birth plans and who could serve as the contact and coordinator for this program as required by HB 2535A. There is a growing body of research that supports the utilization of doulas to aide in the birthing process as well as modification of restraint practices. Two peer reviewed reference articles have been placed at the bottom of this testimony. Other states that have implemented doula programs have been able to help mitigate costs by collaborating with community partners for the services. DOC intends to both collaborate with community partners for these services and ensure that services can be provided if community partners are unavailable.

In corrections work, it is important to be able to assess individual cases and sets of circumstances to provide the appropriate level of restraints and/or searches needed for the safety and security of the AIC, community, staff, and facility. This amended language allows for this.

For these reasons, DOC supports this bill as currently written.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Submitted by:

Oregon Department of Corrections

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Wilson, S. H., Marsh, L. N., Zielinski, M., Corbett, A., Siegler, A., & Shlafer, R. (2022). [Enhanced perinatal programs for people in prisons: A summary of six states' programs](#). *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 101965.

Pendleton, V., Saunders, J. B., & Shlafer, R. (2020). [Corrections officers' knowledge and perspectives of maternal and child health policies and programs for pregnant women in prison](#). *Health & Justice*, 8(1), 1.