

Testimony submitted by: LaJuana Decker
Committee: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Measure: SB 820

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

I write in opposition to SB 820. Oregon has a history in the 21st century of being the state with the highest per capita number of sex offenders among all the U.S. states, with 790 sex offenders per 100,000 Oregonians in 2024,¹ a 15% increase since 2019.² Oregonians, especially women and children, are feeling increasingly unsafe, and this is no time to reduce leveling requirements for those sex offenders who have been released into their neighborhoods and into their communities.

Research shows that recidivism rates for sex offenders is 24% after 15 years³, meaning that 190 of those offenders are likely to victimize another Oregonian after being released into their communities. This means almost 200 women and children will suffer at the hands of these offenders. To allow these sex offenders back into the communities without appropriate leveling is an offense itself against future victims of these crimes.

There are other more efficient ways of leveling, including adopting the level already given to the offender in other jurisdictions. We cannot afford to have Oregon become a magnet for sexual criminals just because they are over 35 years old or have only acted on the criminal impulse one time so far.

Oregon has a responsibility to ensure the safety of Oregonians. We cannot simply hide our heads in the sand and pretend that ignoring the risk these offenders represent will make that risk go away.

I urge you to vote no on SB 820.

¹ “How Many Registered Sex Offenders Are in Your State?: SafeHome,” SafeHome.org, September 17, 2024, <https://www.safehome.org/data/registered-sex-offender-stats/>.

² Chart: The U.S. states with the most sex offenders per capita | Statista. Accessed March 6, 2025. <https://www.statista.com/chart/18575/registered-sex-offenders-per-100000-inhabitants/>.

³ “Recidivism of Adult Sexual Offenders”: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, July 2015, <https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/recidivism-adult-sexual-offenders>