

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and members of the committee,

My name is Edwina Koch, and I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Prison Birth Project (OPBP) to urge your support for SB 293-1. OPBP provides direct support to pregnant and postpartum adults in custody through doula care, childbirth education, and postpartum support groups. Our team works inside Oregon's prisons and jails, offering trauma-informed care, advocacy, and emotional support to ensure that incarcerated individuals receive dignified and appropriate healthcare. Through this work, we have witnessed firsthand the devastating consequences of medical neglect and the urgent need for reform.

SB 293-1 is a critical step toward ensuring that adults in custody receive medical care based on need, not release date, that pre-existing conditions are treated without delay, and that DOC is held accountable for documenting denials of care. Furthermore, aligning the DOC pharmacy formulary with CMMS standards will ensure that patients receive appropriate medications. These are not radical changes—they are the bare minimum of what any healthcare system should provide.

For the pregnant and postpartum individuals we serve, lack of timely medical care can lead to life-threatening complications, inadequate postpartum recovery, and preventable harm to both the birthing parent and their infant. We have worked with clients whose requests for basic prenatal care were ignored, whose serious medical concerns were dismissed, and who faced dangerous gaps in treatment simply because of their incarceration. This is unacceptable.

By passing SB 293-1, you have the opportunity to raise the standard of care for thousands of incarcerated people and prevent harm that disproportionately impacts marginalized communities. I urge you to support SB 293-1 to improve continuity of care, prevent suffering, and uphold the basic human right to medical treatment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Edwina Koch
Oregon Prison Birth Project

