

Voices from CCCF in Support of HB 2631

Enclosed are quotes and letters from women who received reentry-focused civil legal services from the Oregon Justice Resource Center (OJRC) while incarcerated in CCCF.

As the stigma of a criminal conviction is still strong in our society and the women are either still incarcerated or relatively early in their transition out of prison, the OJRC advised the women not to include their full names or information that can be used to easily identify them or their cases.

HB 2631

Testimony from R.C., formerly incarcerated in CCCF

After being released from CCCF, R.C. said the following in an interview about the OJRC legal services that she received while incarcerated:

“First visit that Julia came in...we went over a number of things like licensing and legal issues with my son. She came back a few weeks later and the information that she provided me on my child case was priceless. DHS had awarded him to my ex, to his father, and he took him [out-of-state] and I thought that was it, that was all. I still had parental rights. She gave me that information. I had no idea. I still had a chance of proving myself to get my son back. It gave a reason to want to change, a reason to want to move forward when I got out. And, it helped me know that I had a shot at me getting something I wanted out of life. Now I am going on a year-and-a-half out. I’ve got three years clean and sober. I’ve got my son and I know what direction I’m taking.”

February 11, 2019

Dear members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 2631. I am currently incarcerated in Coffee Creek Correction Facility. While in CCCF, I received civil legal help from the Oregon Justice Resource Center.

The legal assistance provided by Julia changed my life. By her being my voice and advocate to my Tribal Courts. I was able to re-unify my child with my family. It was OJRC who provided the statutes on Tribal Law which gave grounds to file a modification hearing. Not only did OJRC provide research, but also visits face to face to combine all resources & material available to build a strong case.

Being able to be actively involved as part of the process as an incarcerated parent is important, so our children know they are cared for & loved. that we pay attention.

By receiving the help I did from OJRC I will have my family when I am released.

Thank you Oregon Justice Resource Center for helping navigate the Tribal Courts, connecting with my family, together.

Please support HB 2631.

Sincerely,


HB 2631

Testimony from Selina, currently incarcerated in CCCF

Selina did not have the chance to see her infant son one last time before going to prison. But, having a son changed everything for her. She grew up with a mother who was in and out of jail and prison and she wants a different life for her and her son.

Selina's son's father asked a court to give him sole custody of their son and control over whether their son saw or communicated with Selina. This out-of-state court would usually assume that an incarcerated parent could not participate in a child's life and find against them. The OJRC attorney helped Selina get a hearing and she was able to go through mediation with her son's father. Although the court ordered sole custody to her son's father, it also ordered for Selina to have weekly video visits and phone calls with her son. Since the court order, her son has also spent time with Selina's family on the weekends and her son came to CCCF for a visit.

Selina said:

"I think about my son all the time. He's only little so he doesn't talk much on the phone yet. But he knows who his mom is. It's important that he can see me and hear me so we can stay connected. I can't wait to get out so I can be with him. I wouldn't have gotten as far as I did without the OJRC. There aren't many people willing to take the time. Being able to keep in contact with my son is making me think differently about my prison time. I've been learning about parenting and being a better mom. I'm focused on getting through this so I can be with my son."

February 5th, 2019

I support HB 2631. I am incarcerated in CCCF & received Civil legal assistance from the Oregon Justice Resource Center. For me the help was invaluable; I was going to do an entire 120 mo. sentence day for day due to a clerical error made by the courts. I was actually supposed to do 7 1/2 yrs w/ NO good time & the remaining 2 1/2 years I would receive 20% good time, Alternative Incarceration Program eligible. This along w/ a 120 day transitional leave gives me as much as 6 mos good time & the 4 mos trans-leave can give me a release date of up to 10 mos earlier than before the OJRC attorneys intervened.

Also, I was given back \$25⁰⁰ of seized \$ that would've been lost to me if not for OJRC. I tried for 3 years on my own to get done what OJRC accomplished in a few months -

I am also getting all debts to courts verified to get my drivers license re-instated, making payment plans & also help with financial aid debt info. When I leave here I will know what lies ahead of me responsibility-wise & that is a lot of weight off someone's shoulders who is walking out to the community again - It gives confidence & it gives me hope - OJRC ^{IS} NEEDED! Please support this HB 2631 - Thank you

Respectfully

Kelly S.

January 31, 2019

DEAR HOUSE Judiciary members,

I am writing to support HB 2631. I am currently incarcerated at CCCM. I received civil legal help from the OREGON Justice Resource Center while here in CCCM.

The legal help they've offered me has been very important in that I have gained knowledge and the resources I need to make a successful re-entry back into society. It has also equipped me with the tools and wherewithal to be able to establish roots with my community and establish networking within my community.

There are a lot of women incarcerated who receive no legal help their whole incarceration, and leave to re-integrate back into society lost and without hope, and not knowing the first step to take that will keep them grounded and focused on continuing their rehabilitation on the outside.

This is also help to why the legal help from the OREGON Justice Resource Center was so important and profound for me, and will continue to be instrumental in my healing process after I parole.

Sincerely,
A.F.