

February 3, 2020

Chair Sanchez and House Judiciary Committee,

We are writing in support of HB 4121 which will pave the way for us, as Oregonians, to end use of the NORCOR facility in the Columbia Gorge as a detention facility for Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

ICE presence in the NORCOR facility increases the fear members of our immigrant community feel in the state of Oregon. Immigrant acquaintances of ours are in a state of literal panic seeing the inhumane detention practices in America in the past few years. And Oregonians and Americans are shocked that ICE, in our name, is locking up, or processing without due process, thousands of immigrants seeking amnesty and herding immigrant children into cells, separating them from their parents.

Reports indicate that, besides the moral question of using our facilities as part of ICE abuses, it costs the NORCOR facility more to detain folks for ICE than it gets from its contact. NORCOR also fails to meet our communities' goals of restorative justice and has limited space for programs, education or mental health services. Eliminating ICE contracts would free up NORCOR facilities for programs and services which would meet our needs for a more humane and effective criminal justice system.

In viewing the abuses in our US immigration system, locking thousands of people up in inhumane conditions, I think about my late father, Capt. Marne Mercer, who fought with the US Army to defeat Nazi Germany, a country whose citizenry, by in large, supported or ignored the imprisonment and abuse and murder of millions of its citizens.



And about my wife and my recent trip to, Cambodia, where millions were imprisoned and died in the Killing Fields, while the world stood by and watched.



As Oregonians and Americans we need to stand up and make sure that human rights abuses are not perpetrated in our names.

Thanks for your vote in support for passing HB 4121, to make sure our justice system is working for justice and the support of human rights.

Lee Mercer and Laurie Chadwick, Silverton OR

