

Oregon House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Sarah Rohrs. I live in Salem, Oregon. I am writing to express strong support of HB 4121. Passage of this bill would be beneficial in paving the way for ending the contract Northern Oregon Regional Correctional Facility (NORCOR) has with Immigrations Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain inmates.

I submit my comments in anticipation of the hearing the committee will have on HB 4131 on Monday, Feb. 3 at the Oregon State Capitol.

Passage of this bill is a culmination of powerful work done by hundreds of people in the Oregon Gorge and other parts of Oregon to draw attention to the injustice, misery and wrongness of housing ICE detainees at NORCOR, a county facility not designed for that purpose.

For years, dedicated activists have held more than 500 rallies, staged large vigils drawing people statewide, and done other campaigns with one goal in mind which is to get ICE out of NORCOR. At least 2 inmates staged hunger strikes to draw public attention to the wrongness of using NORCOR to house ICE detainees. NORCOR has caused untold misery for ICE detainees by not allowing family visits, and limiting their access to work, food, clothing and other necessities, as well as not providing library materials for legal research.

Passage of HB 4121 would accomplish the goal of getting ICE out of NORCOR by providing funding to NORCOR in exchange for breaking its contract with ICE. I strongly support this.

NORCOR was never designed to house ICE detainees and should stop this practice immediately. NORCOR serves four counties in the Oregon Gorge. However, the facility was overbuilt. The ICE contract was meant to generate funds for maintenance and operations. But this did not come to pass. The costs to house ICE detainees exceed the revenues generated through the contract. As a result, local funds go to house ICE detainees. This is wrong. Local resources should not be used to subsidize ICE activities.

Housing ICE detainees at NORCOR generates fear in the local community and violates Oregon's sanctuary statute which voters strongly reaffirmed in 2018 by soundly defeating Measure 105 at the ballot box.

Housing ICE detainees at NORCOR places an undue burden on the facility. The jail already lacks sufficient space for programs, education, or mental

health services. NORCOR's current revenues and budget do not meet all its needs. The proposed HB 4121 would allow NORCOR to break its contract with ICE and free up needed funds for maintenance and other community programs.

I strongly support passage of HB 4121 as the right course of action for NORCOR, the local community, and the state at large.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Rohrs  
Salem, Oregon