

2.4. 2021

The Honorable Janelle Bynum, Chair

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The Honorable Karin Power, Vice-Chair

House Committee on Judiciary

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Re: Support for HB 2912 – Reauthorizing Re*Membering

Dear Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility supports the passage of House Bill 2912 (Rep. Sanchez). HB 2912

improves the health and safety of Oregon communities by reauthorizing funding for Re*Membering, which provides reentry-focused civil legal services to women during incarceration and reduces barriers to a successful return to the community.

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We know that almost everyone incarcerated in Oregon will return to our communities and families one day.

Many will cycle through our criminal justice system more than once. Our communities pay a high price. New skills and a genuine commitment to change may not be enough for post-prison success due to overwhelming legal, social, and economic barriers.

Many challenges faced by formerly incarcerated people are a result of poverty and civil legal issues unaddressed during or exacerbated by incarceration, as well as more than one thousand Oregon laws and policies that are barriers to full participation in society by those with criminal histories. Access to civil legal services is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain without an abundance of resources.

Each incarcerated person may face a wide range of civil legal issues that can impact their transition into the community: child custody and parental right, debt, housing and employment, suspended/revoked driver licenses, real property, property, and other basic human needs.

Investing in civil legal services for currently incarcerated people will help reduce the risk of recidivism and increase the chances of stability. Tackling problems before they spiral out of control saves resources later. By passing HB 2912 and making a modest investment now in civil legal assistance during incarceration, Oregon can save taxpayer dollars and improve the health and safety of our families and communities.

Re*Membering has already done amazing work, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, that



Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility

The US affiliate of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Recipient of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize

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will impact communities statewide. Since it began meeting with clients in late November 2019, Re*Membering:

- Has served nearly 60 women, more than 55% identifying as BIPOC, addressing 1 to 6 different legal matters each; and
- Has served women releasing to 20 different counties with 75% releasing outside the metropolitan tri-county (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas) area.

There is a real need for these services. In the first three months, Re*Membering received over 200 requests for services.

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility urges you to vote yes on HB 2912.

Sincerely,

Lluvia Merello

Energy Justice Organizer

lluvia@oregonpsr.org

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is more stylized and cursive, while the one on the right is more legible and appears to read 'Lluvia Merello'.