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March 22, 2021

Senate Committee on Judiciary & Ballot Measure 11
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SB 191, 401 and HB 2172, 2002

I write today to offer my support for Senate Bills 191, 401 and House Bills 2172, 2002 that the Legislature is considering at this time. While I made some horrendous decisions that deserved to be punished, I would note that Measure 11 has served to do little in my case, where I was arrested for the first time in my life for anything other than low level misdemeanors when I was 30-years-old, other than see me incarcerated for decades with no incentive of earlier release.

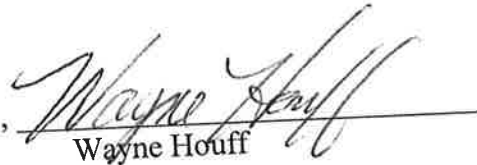
That said, this prison experience has been a pivotal turning point for me that has enabled me to truly discover myself, my passions, talent, and ultimately my purpose in life. I have been able to develop my physical and mental self more than ever before. In essence, prison saved me from myself and gave me a greater quality of life that I would have likely never experienced had I never come here. In the end, there will be rewards to be had. With my knowledge and understanding I will have greater appreciation for and an ability to maintain relationships, live a clean and sober lifestyle, and have an overall enjoyment of life that is devoid of chaos and self-inflicted pain. Rainbows are sure to await me at the end of my storm and it helps me stay focused and optimistic about my time. I know without it, my life would have been no doubt, an endless cycle of addiction, pain, emptiness, and self-destruction even more terribly worse than it was. The same way it is necessary that rain comes before the rainbow, so it is that I must embark down this path to bring about the dramatic change I strive for. I am grateful for all of this because my quality of life will be greater than it ever was. I am using this experience to gain insight that I can in turn share with others.

I do not excuse or rationalize anything I have done and who I had become. I only try to make human sense of it all or more accurately defined as "insight." When I hit rock bottom, I used it as the foundation upon which to rebuild my life. What I am asking for is grace, not that I have earned it or because I deserve it, only the grace to see that I am indeed a human being rather than just a host to an epidemic of abuse and irresponsible behavior. I have committed unbearable acts; there are those that bear testimony to that. I am a son and a father, among other noble things. Past behavior was not fixed in me as a matter of personality nor will it find a place in the future. The goodness in me will continue to prevail over the moral and emotional damage that I carried with me for so

long. The passage of my time here has healed my wounds. The path to transformation, rehabilitation, and redemption has not always been easy, but it has shown results.

In the end, Measure 11 has served to ensure that I was incarcerated for a large portion of my wage-earning years as basically a first time offender. No matter how I applied myself while doing my time, Measure 11 would not allow me to earn time off for good behavior, or lose it for bad behavior. Measure 11 has served little incentive or deterrence in my life like it has for countless other inmates that I have encountered in the last 24-years. You all have the opportunity to impact thousands of lives in a positive way by passing legislation that would afford earned time for those of us already doing time as well as those in the future. I wholeheartedly encourage this because I think it is the right thing to do. Thank you all for your valuable time and attention on this important matter.

Sincerely,


Wayne Houff

C: File