

April 1, 2021

Representative Bynum and the members of this committee,

I respectfully write in support of HB 3229. Health care services should nonnegotiablely be available to everyone regardless of criminal history or state of custody. Simply because someone is in custody does not absolve the state from providing basic health related services and addressing the health needs of individuals in local correctional facilities. Through the creation of an advisory council's minimum standards, policies, and procedures, a baseline to ensure all people are given the care and attention they require can positively be put in effect.

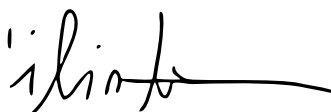
As a law student, I have had the opportunity to learn about the nuances of the criminal legal system, and the danger the system poses to communities of color, women, LGBTQ, low-income, and unhoused people. Injustice undeniably occurs with over-policing of oppressed communities at disproportionate rates. Taking this into account, denying those who are jailed proper access to health care services would be a crime unto itself, and would continue to perpetuate the vicious cycle of failing to provide resources to underserved communities now at their most vulnerable, in custody.

HB 3229 affords Oregon and this legislative body the ability to provide a basic human right to those who have already experienced many of theirs stripped away. Health care services should be a priority in and out of jails and prisons, but especially in situations where individuals cannot adequately advocate for themselves. This body must provide appropriate protections for the health and well-being of all Oregonians, in custody or not. The creation of an advisory council to put in place minimum standards for correctional facilities to meet, would helpfully create a floor to guarantee healthcare access for everyone affected by the legal system.

Fiscal impact will always be a concern, especially when financial resources are pooled to benefit something as stigmatized as jailing/incarceration. This bill, HB 3229 explicitly outlines the advisory council should assess the costs for the minimum standards they create. In addition to providing an assessment, the council will identify potential funding sources to cover the established costs—this action plan for funding therefore does not result in wishful thinking, but instead an attainable goal.

HB 3229 will identify a necessary baseline for providing health care services. The advisory council incorporates a multitude of voices with different perspectives on the care and needs of people who have been taken into custody and now exist within the criminal legal system. For these reasons, I support HB 3229. Thank you for your consideration and your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ilima R. Umbhau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

'Ilima R. Umbhau