

The day I got sentenced to 14 years, I saw my mother age unequivocally before my eyes. Not physically, but as if I could see her soul take the burden of those fourteen years at that very moment. Not for anything SHE did, but a mistake that I had made. The guilt I feel for what got me here, on top of the immense strain I have put on my family is at times unbearable, but I try to maintain the feeble facade that I am strong and OK so as to not put any more pressure on them. Passing senate bill 191 wouldn't be excusing or pardoning our behaviors that brought us to prison, but instead, it would help us to do our time well instead of allowing this time to "do" us. I am a mother of two children Aidyn 12 and Adasyn 9. A lot of us are mother's in here. I am fortunate to have my mother and stepfather who took my children in to love and support them. Without them, Aidyn and Adasyn would have been wards of the state because their father is a heroin addict. To have earned time in prison will have so many beneficial outcomes. It's not only about reducing our sentence, but also to encourage myself and fellow adults in custody to serve their time with more purpose. So many times I have heard people charged with a mandatory minimum sentence say, "I am day for day, so what's the point?" Instead of using this time to rehabilitate, they sadly waste their time here because they feel no incentive, and most importantly no HOPE to do their time well. Having earned time isn't just giving us freedom or taking the significance of our sentences. We will gladly earn it, and in turn, create a safer and more rehabilitative environment. I firmly believe it will make Oregon prisons safer for staff and AIC's. Please, I am pleading with you and begging for your consideration in passing this bill. If not for me, then please, for our families who seem to get punished just as much, if not more than we who committed the crime do. Thank you from the depths of my heart and soul for your time in reading this letter. Your time and consideration means the world to my family and me.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Lovell