

2021 OREGON SENATE BILL 191
TESTIMONY TO OREGON SENATE
APRIL 6, 2021

Honorable Senate Chair Prozanski and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Richard C. Armas and I reside in Gold Hill, Oregon. Affiliated with Time Does Not Fit The Ctime

Thank you for the opportunity to address this most important issue.

Let me state for the record, that I do have a vested interest in this Bill. My son was sentenced under M11 Minimum Mandatory Sentencing statutes and is currently serving a sentence proscribed by M11 of 300 months. Whether that was an appropriate sentence or not is not germane to the discussion of this bill, other than that the sentence included the stipulations that he would not be eligible for early release due to “good time” served, as is the case with all non-M11 crimes, nor would re-habilitative programs in prison be available to him. In pronouncing the sentence, the judge in the case stated that he considered the sentence of 300 months to be excessive for the offense and the circumstances; but that... “his hands were tied by Measure 11.”.

This “Lock them up and throw away the key” concept does nothing to encourage good behavior – in fact a case can certainly be made that it promotes bad behavior and violence in our institutions.

In prison, my son has had a perfect behavioral record, and has:

- 1) Led classes to teach other Adults in Custody how to type and use computers,
- 2) Led many classes in “Mindfulness” for the AICs in segregation
- 3) Held a very responsible job in an administrative office
- 4) And volunteered to do the “Hazmat” cleanup and sanitizing for several months of the Covid 19 Quarantine Area at the facility and for which he has earned the respect and gratitude of both the Correction Officers and the AICs.
- 5) Helps other AICs in preparing their income tax forms – many have not filed for a very long time due to the extreme length of their sentences.

Under M11 requirements, all of these activities will earn him “zilch, nothing”!! He will not be eligible for “good time” sentence reduction, nor any programs that the facility offers to assist an AIC in being successful in life after release.

As regards the financial impacts of this bill, I understand the reluctance to attach an amount, but it stands to reason that a reduction in sentences will reduce the costs of incarceration to the state. At a conservative cost of at least \$30,000 per year, the 20% reduction in sentence for “good behavior” as is the maximum allowed for non-M11 crimes would be a reduction of 5 years of a 300 month sentence, which would result in a savings to the state of at least \$150,000.

Governor Brown's intent to reduce incarceration costs by closing facilities would certainly be aided by the early release of deserving and rehabilitated inmates, thus helping to reduce the overcrowding that already exists and will be exacerbated by transferring inmates from the closed prisons to the

remaining open ones. Overcrowding has been proven to increase violence and most recently, to be a major contributor to the Covid epidemic in all prisons.

There is something wrong with a system that calls it's prisons "Correctional Institutions", yet in actuality are only punitive in nature to Measure 11 AICs.

I implore you to approve this bill which will in a small way atone for the injustice imposed by the draconian penalties imposed by M11.

Sincerely, Richard C. Armas