

Senate Committee on Measure 11
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

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For Measure 11 Reform in the State of Oregon

Dear Senate Committee Judiciary Matters:

My name is Than Kim, SID #21572482. I am currently an inmate at Oregon State Correctional Institute. I want to share my view on Measure 11. For more than 24 years that I lived in Oregon, I had no knowledge of Measure 11 and how one day it would affect me. Like most working professionals, business owners, and law abiding citizens and immigrants, my priority was on work, business, family, and my contribution to the community. My Vietnamese culture, ethical and moral values, and family oriented upbringing is totally against crime. My only understanding of Measure 11 was that it required inmates to serve day per day of their stipulated sentence. There was no good time credit for good behavior or work time credit for any programs. This harsh punishment pushes for lengthy prison terms by adding consecutive sentence structures in most cases for the same crime. There is no consideration of criminal history, background, or first time offenders. Measure 11 takes away the power of the judge and allows the district attorney to expect more power in the eyes of the public as being tough on crime. As a result in the last 25 years, Oregon prison skyrocketed with the longest inmate prison terms compared to the rest of the country. Measure 11 has bankrupted Oregon and put the state billions of dollars in debt. The cost to the state includes a wide range of safety issues and legal expenses.

Why is Oregon the only state with Measure 11? How is Measure 11 an effective way to solve crime? Does maximum sentencing fix the recidivism state? Should first time offenders be categorized the same as career criminals? The same crime that carries a five year prison term with good time served in Washington, California, or Idaho would require a minimum 20 years with upward departure in Oregon because of Measure 11. Do offenders need to serve 20 years in order to atone for their mistakes? Taking away

Measure 11 would reduce the prison population and alleviate financial burden from the state. Although some may argue that closing down prisons would take away jobs from the community. With early release incentives, a young inmate population can make positive contributions to society because they are in their prime working years. Also, the aging inmate population would be better off with family rather than being housed at high costs to the state. Measure 11 gives no incentives for inmates to work toward positive changes. What will happen when we take away the rewards from people for being good? It defeats their purpose of trying. As a result, Measure 11 encourages racism, gang violence, drugs, gambling, extortion, criminal behaviors, and criminal activities behind bars. By giving an incentive, inmates have options and hope to turn their lives around. I have met some wonderful people during my short time in prison. From the general population to medical staff, educators, volunteer and correctional officers, I see a community of good people living under the same roof. Not all crimes are premeditated and not all criminals are career criminals. As a society, we tend to judge offenders as criminals believing that they deserve to be rotten in prison. I think we need to look at it with a more compassionate approach to their circumstances. I came to this country at the age of 14. I work hard in school and follow the American dream of owning my business. I wanted to provide more for my family back home and my children's future. I follow the rules, be a good citizen, and take care of my family. There is no need for me to commit any crime.

Since my incarceration, I held a job and maintained excellent behavior while attending the University of Oregon and Corban University as a full-time student. I am a first-time offender with a low ARC score and am not a threat to the society. I hope to reunite with my children sooner and make positive contributions to society. My plead for the Senate is to make changes to the Measure 11 reform and give many first time offenders like me a chance for good times to earn credit.

I truly appreciate your attention and support in consideration on this matter.

Best regards,

Than Duy Kim