

We, the undersigned, urge the passage of Senate Bill 207, which would provide funding for an Independent Corrections Ombuds Office in the Oregon Governor's Office for the next biennium. This position was established by statute but has not been funded for many years.

As established in other states, an Ombudsperson would have the ability to enter and inspect prisons without notice, conduct confidential interviews with incarcerated people and prison staff, recommend improvements and monitor their implementation, access data and records, and help resolve complaints from families and prisoners and correctional officers who are concerned about AIC (adult in custody) welfare. A corrections ombudsperson is focused on the health, welfare and rehabilitation of the AIC's and is not involved in correctional officer disciplinary actions.

Over the past several years, various advocacy organizations have highlighted the need for changes within the DOC and yet have difficulty gathering the information needed to analyze and support their efforts. Given that the corrections system incarcerates a disproportionate number of persons from the BIPOC community, these issues have affected minority AIC's and family members at a disproportionate rate. An ombudsperson would provide oversight for the most vulnerable in DOC custody, such as LGBTQ AIC's and those with mental illness, developmental and/or medical disabilities, and in segregated housing units.

Legislators receive letters and calls on a regular basis from persons concerned about systemic issues or about individual AIC issues. However, legislators often do not have the expertise or information necessary to know how to address these concerns. The ombudsperson can network with prison focused organizations, AIC clubs within the prisons, AIC family groups and can assist both the legislature and the DOC administration with recommendations for positive systemic changes. At the same time, the expenditure of funds for an Independent Corrections Ombuds office can save the State

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of Oregon money from reduced liability claims. We support adequate funding of independent oversight of the Oregon Department of Corrections through the passage of Senate Bill 207.

Karen Cain, President  
*on behalf of* **Oregon CURE**

**ACLU of Oregon**

Board of Directors  
**Oregon VOICES**

**Partnership for Safety and Justice**

**Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association**

Paul Solomon  
*on behalf of* **Sponsors, Inc.**

**Red Lodge Transition Services**

Jordan Schott, Director of Legislative Strategy  
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Riley Burton, Director of Financial Operations  
John Hochstetler, Director of Technical Operations  
*on behalf of* **Oregonians Against Slavery and Involuntary Servitude (OASIS)**

**Sunrise PDX**