

COURTNEY NERON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 26



Testimony in Support of HB 4146

February 1, 2022

Hello Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power, and members of the House Judiciary Committee.

As a participant in the 2021 Gender Responsiveness workgroup and legislator representing the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF) here in Wilsonville, I support HB 4146. The bill appoints a gender-responsive coordinator, assesses CCCF gender-responsive and trauma-informed practices, as well as creates a Gender-Responsive Advisory Council that will conduct listening sessions around the state and provide recommendations.

Whether they are victims, witnesses, or offenders, justice-involved women face gender-based discrimination and barriers to justice that must be addressed. Women typically have different risk factors that require different interventions than men before, during, and after their involvement with criminal activity. A lack of gender-responsive practices directly impacts mass incarceration, recidivism, and perpetuates cycles of trauma, victimization, and harm among impacted families and communities.

A survey done by the [Women's Justice Pilot Project](#) in 2017 found that of 140 incarcerated women in CCCF, 65% of the women in a relationship at the time of arrest reported abuse in their relationship and that 69% of women said that trauma led to their involvement in the criminal justice system. Women are also more likely to be the primary caregivers for their children and need different family and legal support while incarcerated, as their incarceration separates and further traumatizes their family. From childbirth to nutrition, history of surviving abuse and assault to higher likelihood of substance use, women face unique needs. **In a system originally designed to incarcerate men, women deserve a conversation of their own to inform gender-responsive interventions that have been proven to significantly improve safety and provide more positive outcomes.**

HB 4146 seeks to provide a baseline for a strategic planning process, policy recommendation, and improved protection of individuals who are incarcerated at facilities such as Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. With rates of incarceration of women rising faster than any other demographic, we must examine and improve responsiveness to the unmet needs of women within our current system. I believe this is one important step to better respond to perpetuated cycles of gender-based discrimination and intergenerational trauma, as well as to ensure successful outcomes for justice-involved women and their families.

I urge your support of HB4146.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Courtney Neron'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

State Representative Courtney Neron