

Submitter: Michelle Stevenson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1070

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the committee

I am an Oregonian, born and raised. I live in Portland. I am a survivor of domestic violence and a survivor of crimes where the jailed perpetrator would probably qualify for consideration of lowered sentences due to SB1070. I have never been incarcerated but I am friends with many that have been incarcerated and have had experience working in a domestic violence shelter. What I have heard from my neighbors, friends, and family coincides with the letters written in support of SB1070.

I support SB1070 because of the unjust stories I've heard from people I care for and because I am against mandatory minimums. People are people, not baked goods, we are not cookie cutter shapes, we do not come out of factories. We need to be seen individually within the criminal justice system. I have seen the system treat people like things and not see them as people with whole, complicated histories. I want that to change.

I speak as a victim: I do not forgive, I never forget, I hope I never see people that committed crimes against me again. I want the system to be thoughtful and aimed at making it never happen again. A mandatory minimum sentence for domestic violence victims is not thoughtful and is not aimed at making it never happen again, it's aimed at revenge. I don't personally believe revenge is inhumane in a vacuum, but we don't live in a vacuum. Our system has proven itself over and over to be unequal in application of revenge and as such, is unqualified to mete it out. The criminal justice system should constrain itself to sentences tailored for the pragmatic public good, to make sure it doesn't happen again, mostly. SB1070 will open a window for judges to do that more equitably.