

Submitter: Maya Rinta
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1070

My name is Maya Rinta. I am a long time Oregon resident, and am writing today in strong support of Senate Bill 1070, which will help to end the over-incarceration and continued abuse of survivors of domestic violence. We must recognize and support all survivors of domestic violence in Oregon. Please vote to pass SB 1070 out of committee with a "Do Pass" recommendation.

In Oregon, more than one-third of women experience domestic violence. For too many survivors of domestic violence, their victimization is a pathway to incarceration. They are arrested and prosecuted for acts committed out of survival, like protecting themselves or their children from the abuser, fighting back or trying to escape from the abuser, or stealing out of financial need due to the abuse. Once a survivor of domestic violence becomes a criminal defendant, their status as a survivor is stripped from them, and they are usually prosecuted and sentenced by the state to the fullest extent of the law. As an attorney, I've worked with survivors who were criminalized for actions directly related to surviving abuse, and no part of the criminal legal system was allowed to consider or acknowledge these circumstances. Like many of us, I have also had loved ones close to me experience interpersonal violence, and I have worried about how protecting themselves or trying to survive the abusive relationship could so easily enter them into the criminal legal system. This desperately needs to change.

Across Oregon, 70% of likely voters said they would support legislation that would allow courts to impose shorter sentences—including resentencing people already in prison—for people who are survivors of domestic violence when the abuse was a contributing factor to the offense.

SB 1070 would do just that by allowing judges the discretion to impose a lesser sentence if: 1) the defendant was subjected to domestic abuse; 2) the abuse was a contributing factor to the defendant's criminal behavior; and 3) sentencing the defendant to a presumptive or mandatory sentence would be unduly harsh in light of the circumstances.

Judges should be allowed this discretion in these circumstances, rather than having their hands tied by harsh mandatory minimum sentences which are steeped in and born from anti-Black racism.

I request that you vote to pass SB 1070 out of committee with a "Do Pass" recommendation, and support this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.