

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen & Wallan, Members of the Committee

Re: Support of HB 4097

I write today in support of HB 4097. We must find ways to improve the reintroduction into society for people who have been incarcerated and have duly served their time. A case in point, we have been friends and professional colleagues for almost 40 years with couple in an East coast state who raised two adopted sons of color. The oldest, a young man good with his hands, had a lifetime goal of becoming a union carpenter near a seacoast, and was considering Oregon. However, he made a mistake during a Black Lives Matter rally and committed a crime. He was charged, convicted and served time. After his release, he found his reintegration to society to be blocked on all sides. He was unable to find an apartment, get a job or join a union as an apprentice where he lived and where the path to expungement was measured in decades, even for a relatively minor crime. He tried again here in Oregon and was again unable to find a path forward for a place to live or work. Last year he gave up hope and took his own life. This was a waste of a life. It is morally wrong for our society to punish people for a lifetime after serving time for a crime in which no one was hurt.

Because the crime was committed in another state, had this bill been in place it would not have helped him. But it will help many Oregonians suffering under a similar weight of hopelessness. I ask the members of the committee to support HB 4097 and make Oregon a more just state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. The young man's name was Benjamin.

Daniel Frye