

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

My name is Angela Kim. I am a staff member of the Oregon Justice Resource Center. I serve on two of the Governor's Advisory Panel work groups and have dedicated countless hours alongside my colleagues to developing recommendations that address the harms and failures identified in the GIPA report. I am in support of SB 1120.

I was incarcerated at Coffee Creek for 17 and a half years. During that time, I supported many women as they struggled to survive incarceration. Today, I remain in close contact with women at Coffee Creek and continue to advocate for them from the outside. I know their stories because I lived them. I know their pain because I experienced it. And I know that without legislative mandates, the culture at Coffee Creek will not change.

I am also a survivor of domestic violence. I was choked, beaten, threatened, and controlled by my partners. I was forced into choices I never would have made on my own. I was threatened with the loss of my children, with more violence, with consequences I couldn't bear. Going to prison may have removed me from my abuser, but it did not end the abuse. Instead, I found myself in an environment where the abuse simply took another form—this time at the hands of the state.

Prison is an inherently abusive environment. Women are strip-searched, often unnecessarily, forced to stand naked, bend over and expose themselves. We are denied medical care, ignored when we are in pain, and retaliated against when we speak up. We are punished for defending ourselves, for grieving, for struggling with trauma that was never of our making. Women who enter Coffee Creek with a history of abuse—many of us do—find ourselves retraumatized, not rehabilitated.

Racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia are deeply embedded in the culture at Coffee Creek. The military-style structure and the dominance-driven culture among correctional officers create a toxic environment not only for AICs but also for staff themselves. Officers are trained to bark orders, demand compliance, and exert control, which fosters an atmosphere of hostility and dehumanization.

Sexism and misogyny are particularly rampant. When male officers are placed in a women's facility, their role as enforcers of absolute control leads to the erosion of respect for women. Over time, their attitudes towards women—both AICs and female colleagues—become tainted with dominance and aggression. Women inside witness this transformation time and again. Staff members, initially fair-minded, slowly become harsh, inflexible, and punitive. This shift creates an environment where the abuse of power is normalized and expected.

Homophobia and transphobia are also pervasive. Coffee Creek is a women's facility, yet any form of physical comfort between AICs—such as a hug or a shoulder rub—is treated as sexual misconduct under the guise of PREA enforcement. This policy pathologizes normal human connection.

I know Coffee Creek will not change on its own. I know this because I have witnessed efforts to improve conditions be ignored or dismantled the moment external pressure is removed. Without legislative mandates, the cycle will continue. This is why SB 1120 is critical.

I worked on many of the recommendations that became provisions in SB 1120. I know that these provisions will force the culture change that Coffee Creek so desperately needs. Women should not have to endure more trauma simply because they are incarcerated. SB 1120 is a necessary step to ensuring dignity, safety, and true rehabilitation.

I urge you to pass SB 1120. Thank you.