

Submitter: Rachel Freed

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB293

I am writing to express my opposition to SB 293, which requires the Department of Corrections to conduct a study on health care for adults in custody. While I recognize the importance of ensuring adequate health care for individuals in correctional facilities, I believe that this legislative approach is not the most effective means of addressing the underlying issues within our correctional health care system.

Firstly, the requirement for a study may result in unnecessary delays in implementing much-needed reforms. The time and resources spent on conducting a study could be better utilized in directly enhancing health care services for adults in custody. We already have ample data and research highlighting the deficiencies in correctional health care; what is needed now is action, not additional analysis.

Secondly, the bill does not provide a clear framework for how the study will be conducted or how its findings will be used to effect meaningful change. Without a defined plan for implementation, there is a risk that the study could become a bureaucratic exercise without leading to tangible improvements in health care delivery for those in custody.

Furthermore, the focus on studying health care may divert attention from other critical areas that also require urgent reform, such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and the overall conditions of confinement. A holistic approach that addresses all aspects of health and well-being within correctional facilities is essential for fostering rehabilitation and reducing recidivism.

Lastly, I am concerned that this bill may lead to increased costs for taxpayers without guaranteeing improved outcomes. If the study results in recommendations that require significant financial investment, it is crucial to ensure that those funds will be allocated efficiently and effectively. We must prioritize solutions that deliver the best value for our communities and the individuals in our correctional system.

In conclusion, while I support the goal of improving health care for adults in custody, I believe that SB 293 is not the right approach. I urge you to reconsider this legislation and instead focus on actionable reforms that directly enhance the quality of health care services in our correctional facilities.