

Submitter: 1515 1516
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB293

I am writing to add my voice to the chorus of support for SB 293-1, calling for health care reform in our prison system.

In 2014, while my partner was held in the Oregon State Penitentiary, he fell deeply ill. For months, his pain went ignored until he was finally diagnosed and treated for tongue cancer.

While there's no doubt that the medical staff saved his life, he was denied proper "after care." As a result, he was unable to swallow solid food, or taste anything he ate, and lost over 100 lbs.. He was finally given Ensure to supplement his caloric intake, but 2 years before his sentence ended, the formula was reduced by half, and I watched in horror as his health plummeted. He was starving.

Within a month after his release in 2023, a barium test showed that he was aspirating with every swallow and he was forced to have a feeding tube installed.

Even though he "did his time well" and his sentence is now complete, I do not have the luxury, and certainly nor does he, of putting the prison experience behind him. We are faced every day with new challenges as a result of the neglect he endured after initial chemo and radiation treatments.

I can't begin to express how strongly I support SB 293-1 and all other bills that arise in a call for health care reform.

I urge the Oregon legislature to require that the ODOC once and for all provide adequate health care to prisoners.