

Testimony in Opposition to Sections 7-12 in HB 4041-1

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Natalia Hernandez. I am here to testify in strong opposition to HB 4041, which includes what is known as the “Torres-Lopez fix.” I want to briefly share my story so you can understand the very real human impact of this policy.

I was lawfully released on August 12, 2025, after my sentence was recalculated. I was released with nothing and nowhere to go. At one point, I even begged to stay and complete AIP because I was terrified to be released with no support. I was told that I had already served past my lawful time and that I had to leave.

After my release, I did everything in my power to never return to prison. I reunited with family I had not seen in years. I moved out of Salem and into sober living in Milwaukie, Oregon. I got a full-time job manufacturing joint and bone replacements. I attend NA and AA meetings every week, and I voluntarily put myself into treatment because staying sober and rebuilding my life was my top priority. I now attend Parrot Creek Treatment Center and have been working hard to build a stable future.

I also married my wonderful husband and became pregnant with our son. I am currently 23 weeks pregnant and due in June. I was finally building a life I could be proud of.

Then, in November, I received a call saying there was a warrant for my arrest related to DOC. I was devastated. I had followed every rule. I had done nothing wrong. I did not understand how this could be happening, but I knew I could not run. I turned myself in.

While I was incarcerated, my husband worked to pay our bills alone. He put money on my books so we could stay in contact. We were supposed to be moving to Alabama to start a new chapter, and instead our lives were put on hold. During my incarceration, I did not receive routine ultrasounds and had only minimal prenatal care. My release date changed multiple times with no explanation. Each change terrified me. I lived in constant fear that I would give birth in prison and have my baby taken from my arms.

Eventually, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled on my habeas corpus and found that I was being unlawfully incarcerated and that I was to be immediately released. Even then, DOC continued to hold me. We filed a contempt of court action. It was not until around 7:30 p.m. on December 24th—Christmas Eve—after a second Supreme Court order, that I was

finally released. Without the Family Preservation Project, I would have been released in the middle of the night with nowhere to go, while my husband was already in Alabama trying to build our future.

In addition to this, mediation involving my daughter has been repeatedly pushed out and delayed due to my continuous reincarceration. These repeated disruptions have caused serious trauma to my family relationships. It has damaged the relationship between me, my child, and my sister, and has prolonged my sister's ability to come home. The instability caused by these repeated incarcerations has made healing, reunification, and family preservation nearly impossible.

Today, I am working again and living in sober living. My husband and I have lost so much and we are financially drained. It feels like our lives have been put on hold for no reason. My family and I now live in constant fear of being sent back to prison again, despite doing everything right.

My child should not have his mother taken from him. My husband should not lose his wife. My daughter should not be kept from coming home because of policies that allow people to be repeatedly and unlawfully incarcerated. Policies like the "Torres-Lopez fix" will only cause more harm to families who are trying to do the right thing. Based on my experience, I believe this bill is unjust and will disrupt more lives than it helps.

I respectfully urge you to vote NO on HB 4041. Thank you for your time and for listening to my story.

Sincerely,
Natalia Hernandez