



April 13, 2023

OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Timothy G Sekerak
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation – HB 2178

Chief Clerk Sekerak,

I am a trial attorney and before every case, I dig into the details to learn all the facts of the matter before trial. I do the same with legislation. When I learned House Bill 2178 would come to the House Floor, I gathered all the facts available and determined that I would vote ‘no’ on this bill.

I voted ‘no’ for three reasons:

- 1) The bill would provide an additional burden on agencies, primarily Department of Corrections, already tasked with numerous operative and budgetary matters.
- 2) Persons who are incarcerated in Oregon do not themselves receive any significant compensation for their services and putting them to work for less than what the job merits is akin to involuntary servitude.
- 3) Projected out, this bill risks making it possible to take advantage of low-wage labor. Incarcerated persons doing work for the state should be paid an appropriate wage and the work should have a narrow and specific role contributing to the benefit of and cost saving for the State of Oregon itself. For example, building furniture and the like for Oregon agencies.

Oregon Corrections Enterprises does great work. Oregon is a state that treats adults incarcerated with respect, much like the sponsor of this measure indicated during his floor remarks. That said, I still voted ‘no’ on this measure for the reasons expressed above.

My father was a minister. In our household, our dinner table conversations were about how we can make the world a better place. That’s what I’m trying to do here in the legislature, and I believe my vote today was an important step to doing that. Should this legislation pass, I will work with my colleagues to ensure it is implemented in a way that moves Oregon forward.

Best,

Representative Tom Andersen

