



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

OAR 291-131 Mail Rule Comments – Key Points

Here's a consolidated summary of key categories:

1. Mental Health and Rehabilitation:

- Mail is crucial for maintaining emotional health and reducing feelings of isolation. It provides a vital connection to loved ones, which is essential for rehabilitation and mental stability.
- Restrictions on mail could exacerbate trauma and mental health issues, potentially increasing recidivism rates.

2. Impact on Families:

- Limiting mail communication disproportionately affects low-income families and children, hindering their ability to maintain relationships with incarcerated parents.
- The proposed restrictions create economic and logistical challenges for families trying to communicate.

3. Questionable Effectiveness of Proposed Changes:

- Evidence from other states shows that mail restrictions do not significantly reduce drug use in prisons, as most contraband enters through other means, particularly staff and visitors.
- The focus on mail may distract from addressing the more significant issue of drug entry via staff misconduct.

4. Legal and Constitutional Rights:

- The proposed changes may infringe upon AICs' First Amendment rights and violate state laws regarding the rights of children with incarcerated parents.

5. Call for Alternative Solutions:

- Instead of restricting mail, the emphasis should be on improving security measures related to staff and exploring alternatives that support family connections while addressing safety concerns.