

WA HB1956 – Exempting from public disclosure sensitive records pertaining to current and formerly incarcerated individuals' dignity and safety.  
OPPOSE

Written Testimony from [Women's Liberation Front](#)  
Submitted February 18, 2022

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to HB1956. My name is Dr. Mahri Irvine and I am the Executive Director of Women's Liberation Front (WoLF). WoLF is the largest radical feminist women's rights agency in the United States. WoLF is a non-partisan, non-profit agency that represents women of all political affiliations.

At first glance, for people who are deeply concerned about reentry success for formerly incarcerated people, HB1956 might seem to be a good idea. However, when we critically examine the impact that this bill will have on women in Washington, it becomes evident that women – especially historically marginalized and vulnerable women in prison – will be harmed by this bill. As you have already heard from other citizens providing testimony, this bill will harm incarcerated women because the public will not be able to learn important information about the violent men who are incarcerated in women's prisons.

HB1956 will contribute to the creation of a state government system and a society that intentionally obfuscates important data, all to serve the special interests of a tiny minority group of men: men who "identify as" women, transgender, or something else.

The authors of HB1956 claim that transgender, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming status is "health information." However, this is incorrect. Gender status (commonly referred to as gender identity) is absolutely not health information. Gender identity is a personal belief that someone holds about himself or herself, based on sex stereotypes. Gender identity is not based on science. Claiming that gender identity is a form of health information is equivalent to claiming that a person's religious identity or political affiliation is health information.

When the government allows men to be incarcerated alongside women, it confines women in spaces with men who are often predatory and violent. Women are endangered when they are incarcerated with men. We are aware of numerous reports of men assaulting women after the men were transferred into women's prisons.

HB1956 will suppress information about the type of men who are in women's prisons. Washington's incarcerated women, their families, and all members of the public deserve to have access to accurate information about the men who are housed in women's prisons.