



Feb. 15, 2020

To: Wendy Carver-Herbert, Secretary, House Judiciary and Rules Committee

RE: The League of Women Voters of Idaho supports HB458.

The League of Women Voters of Idaho (LWVID) has long held a position in support of changing the over-criminalization of people with mental illness in Idaho.

The LWVID believes individuals with persistent and documented severe mental illness (SMI) should be recognized for their diminished capacity to understand criminal wrongdoing.

We all know someone or of someone who has a SMI. We must take the time to try to understand how debilitating that illness is and, in a mental-health crisis, the difficulty to act rationally.

There is a difference between deliberately assaulting medical personal and those who are in a mental-health crisis unable to control their behavior and inadvertently harm medical staff in the process. The latter should not be charged with a felony for their actions.

The passing of HB 458 would keep felony charges for those who intentionally inflict harm and protect a population at their most vulnerable moments who are only trying to find safety within.

Respectfully,  
Susan Ripley, president  
League of Women Voters of Idaho