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Private companies in Oregon jails must serve inmates equally The ruling last week came in a case involving a deaf man who filed a federal discrimination lawsuit.

PORTLAND, Ore. - The Oregon Supreme Court has ruled that private companies providing services to people in Oregon jail custody must abide by federal laws prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations. The ruling last week came in a case involving a deaf man who filed a federal discrimination lawsuit, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported. It notches a victory for civil rights advocates, who argued that people with disabilities have borne an outsized burden when seeking medical care while incarcerated. "This decision will save lives," said Emily Cooper, legal director for Disability Rights Oregon. State lawmakers in 2013 made correctional facilities exempt from laws requiring equal treatment in accommodation, citing as an example that jailers might need to segregate people for safety reasons. The ruling stems from a 2016 lawsuit filed by Andrew J. Abraham, who alleged Corizon Health Inc. had violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by failing to treat him while he was held at the Clackamas County Jail. Corizon stopped operating in Oregon in 2018, according to spokesperson Morgan Hook, the same year a \$10 million settlement was approved to the family of a woman who died after the company's employees failed to keep her hydrated while she detoxed at the Washington County Jail. Writing for the majority, Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice Martha Walters noted that while jails themselves are exempt from certain public accommodation laws, the for-profit companies operating behind bars must serve everyone equally.