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February 11, 2019

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
RE: Senate Bill 321

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee:

For the record my name is Carla Piluso, and I proudly represent House District 50, the great city of Gresham.

I ask for your support of Senate Bill 321, which will streamline Oregon's DNA testing statute and make evidence testing more accessible for the wrongly convicted.

I spent thirty years in law enforcement, and I know there are occasional mistakes in the workings of our criminal justice system. It pains me—and it should pain all of us in positions of leadership—to think that there are currently people in Oregon prisons who do not belong there.

One important tool to prevent these injustices is post-conviction DNA testing, allowing people already in prison to test evidence that was overlooked or misinterpreted during their trial. But our current system denies many people access to this tool. Under Oregon's current standard, it is extremely difficult for the wrongly convicted to successfully petition for testing, putting up a serious roadblock on the path to exoneration.

Senate Bill 321 is a pragmatic fix to this state of affairs. The bill seeks to streamline the petition process and move us to a more balanced standard for when testing is granted. As the hearing will make clear, the advocates who have come together around this issue have worked hard—and are still working hard—to ensure that this policy is not burdensome for either defendants or law enforcement.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Carla C. Piluso
Oregon State Representative, House District 50