



Support for HB 2002
House Rules Committee
Submitted by Paul Solomon, Executive Director
April 30, 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Drazen and Noble, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Solomon and I am the Executive Director at Sponsors, Inc, based in Eugene. I am also the Chair of Lane County's Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC); and serve on the Governor's Racial Justice Council, in addition to many other boards related to public safety.

I am writing today to express Sponsor's support for House Bill 2002, as you've heard a comprehensive criminal justice and public safety reform bill.

Sponsors, Inc., is a national leader in the delivery of re-entry services for women and men returning from prison. We offer a broad range of services—case management, employment assistance, housing, mental health services and mentoring—that people need in order to be successful upon returning to their community. We do this because we believe that people can and do change, and that the right support and services at the appropriate time can serve as a catalyst to lasting change.

We have engaged in the development of all aspects of House Bill 2002, but of particular note we have worked with our colleagues who run re-entry programs and who also have the lived experience of incarceration and being on supervision to develop the portions of the bill related to post-prison supervision.

Post prison supervision is the monitoring a person is required to have when they come out of prison. Each person is assigned an officer who enforces conditions of their release including getting a job, submitting to drug tests, reporting regularly to the officer along with many other rules which we call "conditions of supervision."

My friend and colleague, Gary Cobb, has described some aspects of this portion of the bill that are tremendously important. We must ensure that people on supervision are treated with respect and dignity. We must acknowledge that individuals who have spent time in Oregon's prisons and jails are able to transition into their communities and places of employment with the respect and support they need.

One part of that respect and support is acknowledging the hard work an individual has done to abide by the conditions of their supervision. In 2013, we joined a coalition of organizations in support of the Justice Reinvestment Act which sought to incentivize counties to use less prison with funding for more local services. . In that legislation, House Bill 3194 (2013), we implemented a statewide Earned Discharge Program, which has seen more than 6,300

individuals successfully end their supervision early. Right now, Oregon's program is being studied by the Crime and Justice Institute because of its uniqueness and success.

House Bill 3194 (2013) limited the Earned Discharge opportunity to people on probation after serving their sentence. House Bill 2002 would expand eligibility to **people on post-prison supervision**. As someone who has worked with people coming out of prison for decades, I know this eligibility will be a great tool in providing hope to people at one of the most difficult periods of their lives.

As a society, as a state, it is imperative that we find ways to acknowledge the dedication and work it takes to comply, and live with, the terms of post-prison parole and supervision. We have seen benefits from rewarding good behavior and want to extend those opportunities to more people. When people coming out of prison succeed, all of our communities are safer and stronger.

These modifications to Earned Discharge will expand access to people who can benefit tremendously from the opportunity to reduce their time on supervision.

We know, through practice and research, that people who are on a positive path toward re-engaging in their communities and with their support are more likely to become thriving members of our communities. The opportunity for people to earn a decrease the amount of time under formal supervision is good for people involved in our system and good for our communities.

This program is working. Please support House Bill 2002 to extend this effective, unique and successful program to more Oregonians.