



# Oregon

Governor Kate Brown

## Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision

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January 28, 2021

The Honorable Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee, Members

Re: Testimony for SB 42

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Board of Parole is a public safety agency that has routine contact with individuals on supervision, in custody, or on the sex offender registry. However, we do not have the same benefits as all other state agencies and local county employees who perform similar or the same work. SB 42 would correct that oversight and provide the same retirement benefits for Board of Parole employees.

The Board of Parole is responsible for making important public safety decisions for individuals who have committed aggravated murder, murder, person crimes, sex crimes, and those deemed to be dangerous offenders by the court. Due to the nature of our work, we are placed at an elevated risk of danger. Unlike individuals employed to protect the public at the Department of Corrections, State Police, Youth Authority, Liquor Control Commission, Department of Agriculture, Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, Department of Human Services, and all other public safety officers at the local level, employees at the Oregon Board of Parole do not have the same retirement benefits even though they perform the same or similar work.

Based on the law as it is currently written, employees of our agency which include Board Members and hearings officers, do not have the same benefits as a parole and probation officer or a hearings officer employed by community corrections offices or the Department of Corrections. SB 42 corrects this oversight and allows employees of the Board of Parole who have in-person contact with individuals in-custody, on supervision, or on the sex offender registry to have the same benefits that already exist for Parole and Probation Officers employed by local Community Corrections offices and the Department of Corrections.

Due to the discrepancy, the Board of Parole has historically had trouble recruiting qualified and interested individuals for employment at our agency. In fact, a parole and probation officer who was offered a Board Member position in the past turned it down upon discovering that they would be required to relinquish their current retirement benefits. Right now, four employees at our agency took cuts to their retirement benefits and their ability to retire at an earlier age because they are working at our agency. Recently, a Board Member who loved working for our agency, decided to step down from her role in order to return to a position that

provided her with the regular retirement benefits that comes with dedicating one's life to public safety. We also know many applicants from the public safety sector who chose not to apply to work for our agency did so because they would lose the retirement benefits that they had received for years, if not decades, even though they would have been a tremendous asset to the Board of Parole.

All employees at the Oregon Board of Parole have dedicated their careers to serving the great people of this state. With SB 42, we are asking that the legislature simply recognize that we should receive the same benefits as other state employees who perform the same or similar work.

The Board of Parole is a small agency, and we anticipate that the fiscal impact for approving SB 42 would be minimal. We reached out to the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System, and they provided valuable feedback to help us craft the language for this bill.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

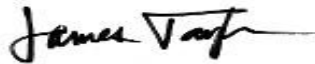
Sincerely,



Michael Hsu, Chairperson



Greta Lowry, Vice-Chairperson



James Taylor, Board Member



John Bailey, Board Member



Dylan Arthur, Executive Director