



**Testimony in support of SB 1568
from the Criminal Justice Study Group of Multnomah County Democrats Platform Committee**

We, the Criminal Justice Study Group of the Multnomah County Democratic Party, are writing in support of SB 1568 - Compassionate Medical Release for Adults in Custody (AIC).

The Multnomah Democrats' 2022 Platform calls for the following:

Plank: We oppose inhumane treatment of prisoners, including solitary confinement used for punishment and ignoring medical conditions needing attention. Appropriate accommodations should be made for elderly prisoners and prisoners with disabilities. Cultural practices of Native Americans, Muslims, and others should be respected. All prisoners must receive healthy and adequate food, along with opportunities for exercise and time outdoors.

Legislative Action Item: We will support legislative alternatives to incarceration whenever safe programs in the community are possible, including but not limited to the following: people diagnosed with mental illness and/or drug addiction; poor people in jails simply because they couldn't afford bail; non-dangerous parents who should be with their minor children; and many others who present no danger to the community.

We agree that respect is deserved for the end of life of any human being including terminally ill AIC. And the same is deserved for any human being including AIC as their bodies age to the point of no longer being able to support their life independently by feeding, cleaning and dressing themselves.

However, we are concerned that family and community support is crucial once an AIC is released. Releasing someone who is sick or elderly without a promise of housing and proper care could cause great harm. This legislation must assure that there will be appropriate post release care for all who qualify for release.

We also note that Oregon's mandatory sentencing laws cause the exclusion of many terminally ill and elderly AIC from release who would otherwise qualify. This is an obvious flaw in an otherwise compassionate and sensible program

We fully agree that a prison cell is the least economic, most inhumane care facility for the elderly and seriously ill AIC that we could imagine. SB 1568 imagines a better Oregon.