



To: Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
From: Paul Solomon, Sponsors Inc.
Date: February 8, 2022
RE: Support for Senate bill 1568, Compassionate Medical Release

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee,

On behalf of Sponsors, I write in support of Senate Bill 1568, Compassionate Medical Release.

Sponsors, Inc. is a national leader in the delivery of Reentry services. To assist people to reenter their communities 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.

Oregon's compassionate release laws recognize that it is in the best interest of our communities for incarcerated Oregonians to be released when, due to medical conditions, their continued incarceration is inhumane and no longer furthers the purposes of imprisonment. Oregon's Department of Corrections data shows that we also have an aging prison population with over 1,000 individuals over the age of 61, with that number projected to grow over the next several years.

Unfortunately, our current compassionate medical release law and process is ineffective and inconsistent. Specifically:

- The eligibility criteria are too narrow and not available to most individuals in need of compassionate release.
- The application process is unclear and inaccessible to most people in prison.
- Review of requests is done by non-health professionals and can take a significant amount of time to complete.

We need more clear parameters and processes for compassionate release. SB 1568 would modernize and update current law by establishing an independent Medical Release Advisory Committee (MRAC). The MRAC would:

- Sit within the Board of Parole but be operationally independent.
- Consist of 5-13 licensed medical professionals, appointed by the governor.
- Review applications and make release recommendations solely and objectively from a medical and public health perspective using the newly established criteria.

Passing SB 1568 will modernize our states compassionate medical release law and allow for individuals who are in need of care that can be best provided outside of our state prisons to access that care when they no longer pose a threat to public safety.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Solomon", written in a cursive style.

Paul Solomon, Executive Director, Sponsors Inc.