



Oregon Voices  
PO Box 13175  
Salem, OR 97302

February 6, 2022

Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee  
Re: Senate Bill 1568-support

Chair Prozanski, Vice-chair Thatcher and committee members

Oregon Voices supports SB1568. It is important to us that convicted persons repay their debt to society and to their victims. However, long prison terms have left many very old and severely disabled people languishing in Oregon DOC. This results in exorbitant housing and medical costs while leaving elderly and frail people to suffer unnecessarily in prison. We have personal experience with scores of these unfortunate people. SB1568 creates a Medical Release Advisory Committee within BPPPS that will establish a fair and equitable procedure for releasing these people from prison to be cared for more appropriately in their community. We support SB1568 and look forward to your vote in favor of the bill.

I was an infirmary orderly and hospice volunteer for many years while I was incarcerated in Oregon DOC. One individual in his late 70's suffered two strokes in prison and was totally paralyzed. He had not moved, spoken, or interacted with others in over 10 years. He lived permanently in the infirmary and required 24-hour care. There was no hope of improving as he lay on his side, totally mute, while waiting to die. He could have been cared for out of prison with family while saving DOC thousands of dollars.

Another inmate developed Alzheimer's Disease while incarcerated. Over 5 years he rapidly deteriorated until he was no longer aware of his surroundings and did not know who he was. He also became increasingly combative creating a constant threat to staff and inmates. Contrary to contemporary medical practice, he was kept in rigid confinement which worsened his mental state and resulted in constant distress. He was in excellent physical health and was expected to live many more years. A modern memory care facility would improve the quality of his life and reduce his suffering. Outside of prison he would have regular interaction with family who could assist with his extensive medical needs.

Oregon Voices supports the creation of a process that would allow elderly and frail inmates to be rigorously vetted for possible release into the community. We support SB1568 which creates a committee to start creating such a process. Our experience has shown us that there are many current inmates that, if released from prison, would not be a threat to society. We want to be sure that every individual has been held accountable for their crime and that all victims feel heard. OV sees SB1568 as a way to serve justice, create compassionate care in an appropriate setting, and save Oregonians thousands of dollars. We ask for your vote in support of SB1568.

For Oregon Voices,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Strickland", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott Strickland