

Mieke de Vrind,
Attorney, Barred in Oregon
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May 3, 2023

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:
Thank you for the opportunity to provide supportive comments on the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision budget (SB 5528).

My name is Mieke de Vrind. I am an attorney licensed in Oregon. I represent Adults in Custody (AICs) before the Oregon Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision. To date, I have represented AICs in at least 35 hearings before the Board, in a range of hearing types. I also have trained others in parole practice. In 2023, I am contracted to represent 11 Petitioners in their hearings. In many ways, parole work is my calling.

The work is difficult. Parole representation is emotionally and intellectually taxing. My clients often have a significant trauma history. Many have learning differences and mental health challenges. Due to changes in the laws regulating murder and aggravated murder over time, their cases are often legally complex. Fulfilling my ethical duties to my parole clients requires significant time. I have the enormous privilege of walking beside clients who understand they have caused harm and have the courage to face their most shameful act. I believe we have a lot to learn from them.

The Board is an incredible release mechanism. It is in Oregon's interest to fund this work. Adequate representation supports those who are deferred. Accurate information around the cause of a deferral and ways of addressing those growth areas supports their chances of success in the future and also supports faith in the agency.

Adequate representation also supports individuals ready for release. Those released individuals contribute to Oregon in extraordinary ways. They have a deep desire to be tax-payers and to contribute to their community they have taken from. Although the re-entry experience is tenuous for anyone releasing from prison, to date, my clients have successfully navigated those challenges. In brief, some of their successes include: re-joining their families, meeting grandchildren for the first time, starting businesses, mentoring others, maintaining decades of sobriety, adopting rescue dogs, managing transitional housing residences, and so much more.

As a solo practitioner, the majority of my current caseload are parole cases. However, \$1900 per case is untenable. If I spend 60 hours on one case, I make a little over \$30 hourly. This is significantly less than any other form of public defense work. Parole representation is a public defense issue.

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I am fully in support of the following:

POP 105 + \$350,000: increased pay for attorneys and additional case types.
Currently, the Board only pays a flat rate for Murder Review and Juvenile parole hearings. It is necessary to increase and maintain rates for all parole hearings.

POP 102: Victim services position

Parole hearings are difficult for everyone involved, especially victims. I am supportive of additional navigation services for those victims, so they can get accurate information about the process.

Thank you,

Mieke de Vrind
Attorney at Law