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**TO: Senate Committee on Judiciary**  
**FROM: Mae Lee Browning, Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association**  
**DATE: February 6, 2024**  
**RE: Support for SB 1560**

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Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Mae Lee Browning. I represent the Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. OCDLA's 1,200 members statewide include public defense providers, private bar attorneys, investigators, experts, and law students. Our attorneys represent Oregon's children and parents in juvenile dependency proceedings, youth in juvenile delinquency proceedings, adults in criminal proceedings at the trial and appellate level, as well as civil commitment proceedings throughout the state of Oregon. Our mission is championing justice, promoting individual rights, and supporting the legal defense community through education and advocacy.

**I am writing to testify in support of SB 1560.**

Oregon's aging prison population is rising. The cost of caring for these individuals is high and their recidivism rate is very low. Prisons are generally ill-equipped to meet the needs of elderly and chronically ill patients who may require intensive services for these conditions. Our current compassionate release process is ineffective. The eligibility criteria are too narrow and not available to most AICs in need of compassionate release. The application process is unclear and the review process can take a significant amount of time to complete. Our statutes recognize that there are instances when incarceration can be cruel and inhumane and not harmful to society if the adult in custody (AIC) suffers from a severe medical condition including terminal illness or is elderly and permanently incapacitated such that they are unable to move from place to place without the assistance of another person.

Studying Compassionate Medical Release can lead to recommendations that place decisions about release in the hands of those that are medical professionals, expand medical eligibility to those who have serious health issues and ailments, and provide support and resources to applicants during the process.

Prisons are not set up to provide a dignified or peaceful environment for someone in the end stages of their life, although many staff and other adults in custody do their best to make individuals comfortable. These Oregonians would be better off at home with their families than in prison.

**OCDLA respectfully urges you to pass SB 1560.**