



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

Date: February 7, 2024

Subject: Support SB 1560

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,

I am honored to be the State Representative for House District 33, which includes NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, and Cathedral Park. Thank you for this opportunity today to submit this testimony in support of SB 1560, which will establish a Medical Release Advisory Committee to establish procedures for adults in custody (AICs) to apply for early medical release from custody.

As a physician, I do not believe current conditions are adequate to compassionately support the end of life needs for adult patients who are in the state's custody. For AICs seeking early medical release, Oregon's current process does not do enough to address their needs. I am confident our Department of Corrections system intends to responsibly balance their accountability to the public with their constitutional obligation to provide community-standard healthcare for the adults in their custody. I think our current processes are falling short as currently the review of requests for release are not being reviewed by medical professionals.

As a state we have not invested in the tools and systems to empower the DOC to deliver community-level quality and coordination of care. We must do better. SB 1560 creates a board of medical professionals who will be tasked with determining the progression of an AIC's illness. This review body will work to ensure patients who truly qualify for early release are able to be recommended for release to the parole board. This is a decision that should be based on clinical indicators by clinicians. Centering patient care and medical expertise when we are tasked with making medically-informed decisions as a state is our obligation.

My sincere thanks to Senator Dembrow and many colleagues from both the House and Senate for their leadership on this bill. I hope all of us can appreciate the burden we carry as lawmakers to adults in custody. When the state puts a person into custody, taking away their agency to advocate for themselves, we come to bear a higher burden of responsibility for their access to high-quality health care as protected by the 4th, 8th, and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. This bill is an important step towards breaking down barriers for adults in custody to access appropriate and adequate end-of-life care.

Sincerely,

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

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.

MAXINE E. DEXTER, MD
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 33



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House District 33 (Northwest and Downtown Portland, Linnton, and Cathedral Park)