



Date: 5/6/2021

RE: Comments on HB 2172

Central City Concern (CCC) is a non-profit direct service organization that provides integrated primary and behavioral health care, supportive and affordable housing, and employment services to people impacted by homelessness in the Tri-County area. Central City Concern operates about 2,100 units of affordable housing, serves 9,000 patients annually through our 12 Federally Qualified Health Centers, makes 1,200 job placements annually and operates social services for the community justice programs in Multnomah and Clackamas counties. **Our programs and properties span Senate Districts 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25; and House Districts 33, 36, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 and 50**

Due to the long history of criminalizing substance use disorder and poverty, many of our clients, residents and patients have some level of engagement with the criminal and legal systems. Some people come to our services as a direct referral for reentry or diversion services, but many more come to CCC because they want to change their lives and the criminal legal system is just another barrier to long-term stability they must grapple with.

One of our reentry programs, called [Flip the Script](#), a culturally specific program for people who identify as African American or Black, has been leading our advocacy work regarding the criminal and legal systems. Current participants and alumni of this group gather on the 3rd Saturday of each month to discuss challenges, often directly with elected officials. We want to thank Sen. Burdick and Sen. Lew Frederick for taking time on Saturday mornings to meet with this group. We also thank the local elected officials, Chair Kafoury and District Attorney Schmidt for meeting with this group. One of the issues top of mind for the group is improving parole and probation supervision. Employers and landlords continue to deny housing to people on active supervision. Supervision can last several years, perpetuating housing and economic instability, that instability can lead to greater rates of re-incarceration. We know from reviewing internal data that a rent-responsible adult with independent income is the least likely to be re-incarcerated, yet these are the very things we deny people when we try to keep them in a system of incarceration even while they are living in community.

HB2172 makes very little changes to the current system. It is incrementalism. After everything that has happened in the last year, we should be willing and able to make significant improvements to our system.



We recommend amending HB2172 to, at the very least:

- Limit the exclusions and maximize people who are eligible for early release. Why would we pre-determine who is capable of changing their lives? This bill is **not** retroactive, so why would we decide today that so many people, convicted years from now, are not capable of reform and deserving of early release from supervision?
- Include a requirement for communication and transparency. In order for reduction in supervision to actually be accessible and fairly applied, the person under supervision needs to know (1) if they are eligible, (2) the conditions of eligibility and (3) get ongoing reports in writing that reflects if they are on track. Without this, the whole process of early release from supervision is a black box of desertion held by the supervising officer. If this is meant to be used as an incentive for compliance, it will not work if someone doesn't clearly understand how they earn early release.

We recommend reviewing language in HB2002-4 Section 14, and incorporating that section into HB2172 to make it a true reform opportunity.

Thank you,
Mercedes Elizalde
Public Policy Director
Central City Concern