



To: House Committee on Judiciary  
From: Jennifer Cameron, President Local 2035  
Date: February 23, 2021  
RE: Opposition to HB 2002

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Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Power and Other Committee Members,

My name is Jennifer Cameron and I am the president of AFSCME Local 2035 which represents state parole and probation officers in Linn County. I am submitting written testimony on behalf of our members in opposition of HB 2002.

We are opposed to HB 2002 in its entirety; however, I will focus my comments on the specific areas that would affect adult parole and probation in Oregon.

One area of concern is the proposed mandate to restrict parole and probation officers from wearing clothing that resembles the uniform of a Peace Officer. In Oregon, parole and probations officers (PPO's) are peace officers in the performance of their duties. We are certified through the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training and are considered Law Enforcement Officers. Parole and probation officers perform many duties in our communities including conducting home visits, searches, arrests and transports. We also work closely with other law enforcement agencies. Because of that, parole and probation officers need to be immediately recognizable in the community. It would be unsafe for our officers if they are not easily identifiable when performing those duties.

For safety reasons, adult parole and probation officers carry firearms in the performance of our duties. This bill would restrict where DPSST trained and certified officers could carry their firearms placing them in unsafe situations. Officers rarely visit places of employment or places where social services are conducted. When we do it is most often to respond to a community report of a significant violation such as contact with a victim or serving an outstanding warrant. Some worksites may also be a person's home. This would leave parole and probation officers unable to protect themselves during home visits. There are also many parole and probation offices located within the same buildings as these social services. This proposal is based on a perception rather than actual safety concerns for the officer or the community.

Eliminating the general condition of supervision that restricts drug use except pursuant to a medical prescription and allowing the use of illicit mind altering drugs with no ability to provide sanctions will make it more difficult to hold justice involved persons accountable. Treatment is always the first option available to those who are willing to take advantage of such programs. Drug use leads to nearly all the criminal activity in



our communities. Allowing drug use to go unrestricted will make it that much more difficult to encourage and motivate drug addicted individuals to seek and succeed in substance abuse and/or mental health treatment. Without consequences there is no need to stop drug use or correct criminal behavior.

Limiting revocations to only those violations involving willful absconding or a new criminal conviction does not take into account other serious violations. Many violations involve contact with victims or ongoing criminal behavior that poses community safety risks. This puts victims and the community at greater risk. It also prevents parole and probation officers from intervening and preventing new criminal conduct thus reducing the effectiveness of supervision. Revocations should also be left the courts and based on the individual's behavior.

Earned Reduction in Supervision would allow for a person to eligible for up to a 50% reduction in their period of probation when they do not willfully abscond or are not convicted of certain new crimes. Currently, many individuals receive shortened periods of supervision for good behavior. This is used as an incentive for compliance. However, this new process would allow for a person to be discharged from supervision even if they committed a new crime but had not yet been convicted or were having ongoing violations. This is providing a benefit without it actually being earned.

Supervision is an alternative to incarceration. It is used to hold justice involved individuals accountable while also offering rehabilitation opportunities designed to reduce recidivism while protecting public safety. We believe this bill does the opposite. It removes our profession from actively engaging in the reformation of offenders and protecting our communities while also considering our officers personal safety.

Thank you for considering this information in opposition of HB 2002.

Respectfully and on behalf of the members of Local 2035,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Cameron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Cameron  
AFSCME Local 2035 President  
Albany, Oregon