



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
SAFETY & JUSTICE**

Submitted to the Senate Committee on Judiciary

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Testimony in Support of SB 581

By Shannon Wight, Deputy Director, Partnership for Safety & Justice

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

For over 20 years, Partnership for Safety & Justice has been advocating for public safety and criminal justice policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both.

Since 2020, PSJ has convened the Transforming Justice Coalition to more intentionally center the voices of those most directly impacted by the justice system in creating and advocating for public safety policies. It is this coalition of advocates, policy experts and people with lived experience with the justice system who worked together to bring forward SB 581, Consistency in Earned Discharge for people on supervision.

We are grateful to community corrections and the Department of Corrections for their support and collaboration on this bill that will increase access to the earned discharge.

Today in Oregon there are about 12,000 Oregonians in prison, and another 30,000 on some form of community supervision. The racial disparities we see in incarceration are often equally present in the supervision system. While sometimes used as an alternative to incarceration, being on supervision can create many hurdles or barriers to success by imposing fines and fees, jail time sanctions, requiring appointments that can cause people to miss work and being denied employment for being on supervision.

Earned Discharge, an existing Oregon law, allows those who are successfully meeting their supervision case plan goals (and were sentenced for an eligible crime) to earn up to 50% off their probation, parole, or post-prison supervision sentence.

As Earned Discharge has been implemented over the past decade, different sets of rules were established to govern eligibility. This has resulted in people being deemed ineligible primarily

because of their sentencing date, even though they were convicted of an eligible crime, and they are successfully complying with their conditions of supervision.

SB 581 will ensure consistency in Earned Discharge by looping all eligible individuals into one eligibility criteria, regardless of the date they were sentenced for their crime. This bill will create meaningful incentives and greater opportunity for people to be successful when on probation, and post-prison supervision, which will simplify the rules for eligibility for the person who is on supervision and the supervising officer.

Oregon's communities are safest when people are incentivized to do well on their supervision. SB 581 is aligned with this belief, and will help the thousands of Oregonians on community supervision who should be able to benefit from this program become eligible.

Earned discharge is supported by community corrections, PSJ, the Transforming Justice Coalition partners and people with lived experience of being on supervision.

We urge your support of SB 581.