

Submitter: William Barnes
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB581

Thank you for taking the time to receive my testimony. I am William Barnes the founder and CEO of RRW, a social service nonprofit located in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Our goal and purpose is to rehumanize underserved and marginalized populations in our community and be a part of the same work across the great state of Oregon. In our work we are determined to give voice to meaningful change within our public safety systems. Without question people of color are overrepresented within the judicial system on every level and we are focused on elevating the advancement of racial justice and safety in Oregon as a result of that overrepresentation. I am a part of the Transforming Justice Coalition: a group of people who are directly impacted by the criminal justice system, culturally specific service providers, and policy advocates coming together to reimagine how our public safety system functions. We believe Oregon should have a balanced and more effective justice system that ensures safety, success, racial equity, and healing.

I live in Klamath Falls, Oregon and serve a community facing significant challenges on many levels. I am confident this part of rural Oregon will benefit from SB581 and RRW fully supports this bill.

For myself, being on supervision for a period of time I recognized opportunities missed by restrictions. The community supervision system did not take into account my positive supervision history and determination to better my life. After being discharged from community supervision I have excelled and although I am not perfect, I have blazed a path of progress and continued advancement, meaningful for many who have had the same experience under supervision. I was able to move out of the area I got in trouble in to start a new and productive life. I continued my education, petitioned the court and received a record expungement, raised two boys and started a successful non-profit

here in Oregon.

SB581 will create an immediate benefit to our local community and state by increasing safety.

Safety is in fact connected to a person's success under community supervision. The value of success continues to be recognized by the Oregon legislature evidenced by the removal of barriers for those on community supervision, making it possible for a real opportunity to Thrive.

Earned discharge utilizes a beneficial tool in the success of ANY individual intentional about making progress, evaluating and recognizing positive progress. Earned discharge will put in place consistent evaluation of a person on supervision, allowing the reduction of the length of supervision in cases where they are meeting service plan goals.

Looking forward, Oregon has an opportunity to advance racial justice through the earned discharge system. Earned discharge will incentivize success by rewarding people who are meeting goals, reducing caseloads by concentrating focus on people struggling to comply with community supervision and most importantly, create consistency for all.

With SB581 Black's and people of color will see a demonstration of equity and meaningful change within the public safety system resulting in the advancement of racial justice in Oregon.

Consistent community supervision builds safer communities. I urge you to support SB 581.