

**MAXINE E. DEXTER, MD**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

DISTRICT 33



## **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**To: Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care**

**Date: March 13, 2023**

**Subject: Support SB 520**

Chair Patterson and Vice Chair Hayden:

For the record, my name is Dr. Maxine Dexter and I am honored to be the State Representative for House District 33, which includes NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, and Cathedral Park. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB 549, which will establish a Medical Release Advisory Committee to establish procedures for adults in custody (AICs) to apply for early medical release from custody.

During the interim I was grateful for the opportunity to tour the Oregon State Penitentiary's hospice care and see first-hand the conditions our AICs face when seeking end-of-life care. As a health care provider, I do not believe current conditions are adequate.

For AICs seeking early medical release, Oregon's current process does not do enough to reflect the medical needs of our adults in custody, with the review of requests for release not being reviewed by medical professionals.

I also want to be clear that I believe our Department of Corrections healthcare teams are dedicated to doing well by our adults in custody. However, we as a state have not invested in the tools and systems to empower them to deliver community-level quality and coordination of care. We must do better.

SB 520 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 qualify and be recommended for release to the parole board. We absolutely should center patient care and medical expertise when we are tasked with making medically-informed decisions.

My sincere thanks to Senator Dembrow and many other colleagues from both the House and Senate for their leadership and partnership 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 is an important step towards breaking down barriers for adults in custody to access appropriate and adequate end-of-life care.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.

House District 33

*NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, & Cathedral Park*