



Testimony of Aliza Kaplan,  
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Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 1560 and the -1 amendment. My name is Aliza Kaplan. I am a law professor and the director of the Criminal Justice Reform Clinic at Lewis & Clark Law School. The Criminal Justice Reform Clinic (Clinic) offers an opportunity for students to get hands-on legal experience while in law school both. In particular, the Clinic works on the back end of the criminal legal system.

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1560 and the -1 amendment. In my capacity as an academic and advocate, I have been engaged on the issue of compassionate release for a number of years. The Clinic has reviewed the literature on the issue, examined various compassionate release statutes around the country and communicated with advocates using those statutes, and in 2022, published a lengthy report on the various types of parole release hearings in Oregon, [An Eye on Reform: Examining decisions, procedures, and outcomes of the Oregon Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision release process](#). Moreover, since 2015, the Clinic has been representing individuals seeking release from prison through clemency, parole, and Senate Bill 819—these have included numerous Adults in Custody (AIC) with serious medical and aging concerns; people that require serious medical attention and/or are at the very end of their lives.

Oregon's current compassionate medical release law is ineffective due to its narrow eligibility criteria, unclear application process, and lengthy review process, making it inaccessible to most AICs who need it the most. In fact, the Clinic has attempted to use the current compassionate medical release law for our clients and have found it close to impossible to navigate even with our legal knowledge and resources.

For many years, advocates and lawmakers have been coming together to address the issue of our inadequate early medical release statutes. I am incredibly thankful for Senator Dembrow's continued advocacy on this critical issue and I believe that the task force proposed in the -1 amendment is the best first step. In particular, I hope the task force will examine a how to create a straightforward application process, which included how medical information is reviewed and the urgency of the claims; who the decisionmaker in these cases should be; the economic costs to the ODOC to deal with its aging and sick population; and how to expand eligibility to those in need who do not present a risk to public safety.

The Criminal Justice Reform Clinic urges your support of SB 1560 with the -1 amendment.