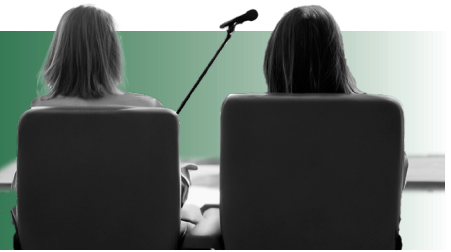


YES on SB 469-1

Improving the Parole Hearing Process for All



SB 469 -1 improves the parole hearing process and encourages rehabilitation and successful release for adults in custody.

The Problem

Oregon's parole process, used to determine the release of individuals convicted of aggravated murder and murder, desperately needs reform. The current process is:

- **Archaic, illogical, unpredictable, and creates false expectations for all involved;**
- **Not considerate of victims' needs;**
- **Adverse to the rehabilitation efforts of adults in custody; and**
- **Wasteful of the Board of Parole's limited resources and time.**

The process starts after an individual serves their minimum sentence, usually 25+ years after the crime, and involves three hearings held throughout an unpredictable time period – sometimes over the course of months to many years. The hearings last for hours and consider redundant information. Victims' families do not know what to expect from the process, have their lives unpredictably disrupted, and are retraumatized over multiple redundant hearings. Lack of clarity in the process deters rehabilitation for adults in custody and makes planning for safe and successful release difficult.

The current parole process is a tangled mess of changes in sentencing laws, court opinions, narrow legislative changes, and questionable rules promulgated by the Board over the last 30+ years

What SB 469-1 does:

- Reduces the parole process to one hearing—the rehabilitation hearing, the first and most comprehensive hearing in the current three-hearing process—without jeopardizing public safety.
- SB 469 provides for a more humane experience for victims' family members, encourages rehabilitation and successful return to the community for those ready for release, and greatly reduces the workload of the Board while encouraging better decision-making.

What SB 469-1 does NOT do:

- It does not lower the standards for release. See *OJRC v. Board of Parole* (2025) →
- It does not make it easier for people to be released.
- It does not reduce the Board of Parole's authority, e.g. the Board retains authority to order psychological evaluations.
- It does not take away process that victims rely on.

See the next page for a chart of the three hearings, showing the unpredictable timing of the hearings, the length of the hearings, and the redundancies in the hearings.



For more information, contact **Zach Winston**, OJRC Policy Director at zwinston@ojrc.info or scan the code at left.

Hearings in the Current Parole Process

(1) Rehabilitation Hearing

Held after the incarcerated person's minimum sentence is served, usually 25+ years.

2 to 8 hours long

The Board assesses an individual's rehabilitation, change, and readiness to join the community.

Note: To improve the chances of success for a person who has proven themselves to be rehabilitated and ready to join the community, the release date should be set in short order, not years after that finding is made.

The Board considers:

- Whether the prisoner has a mental or emotional disturbance... rendering them a danger to the health and safety of the community
- Criminal history, including nature and circumstances of previous offenses
- Release plan
- Institutional conduct and employment
- Treatment, education, and other training while in custody
- Person's maturity, stability, demonstrated responsibility, and development
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- Prior periods of parole or probation
- Past use of narcotics or other dangerous drugs, or past habitual and excessive use of alcoholic liquor

(2) Prison Term Hearing

Usually held 4 to 6 months after a rehabilitation finding favorable to the incarcerated person.

30 minutes to 1 hour

The Board determines the individual's prison term using a parole matrix system from 1985, originally meant to assess someone within six months to a year after their incarceration. The term can be more than the minimum sentence ordered, but is often less than the minimum sentence ordered.

The Board considers:

- Whether the record includes a psychiatric or psychological diagnosis of severe emotional disturbance such as to constitute a danger to the health or safety of the community
- Nature of the crime and prior criminal history of felony convictions

(3) Exit Interview

Held a few months to 10 years after the prison term hearing.

1 to 3 hours

The Board determines whether to release the individual.

The Board considers:

- Whether the prisoner has a present severe emotional disturbance such as to constitute a danger to the health or safety of the community
- Release plan
- Institutional conduct