

**House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee**  
**January 25, 2023**  
**House Bill 2071**  
**Testimony of the BIDS Legislative Committee**  
**Presented by Jennifer Roth**  
**Proponent**

Dear Chairman Owens and Members of the Committee:

We support HB 2071 because it provides the possibility of release from prison for people in the final stages of a terminal illness. We would like to highlight three groups impacted by this bill.

The first group is incarcerated people in the late stages of terminal illness who will have greater access to the possibility of compassionate release under HB 2071. This will provide that they can spend the final days of their lives with loved ones, which will be a tremendous comfort to those who qualify. This will be a limited group as K.S.A. 22-3729(a)(7) already provides strict criteria for determining if a person qualifies for compassionate release; additional criteria disqualifies anyone serving a life sentence from this release procedure.

The second group consists of the families of the incarcerated people who qualify for compassionate release. HB 2071 provides that those families can spend a few days with their loved one before they pass away, something they may not have been able to do in years. It will also relieve those families of the anxiety that comes from having a terminally ill loved one in prison. It is frequently difficult to communicate with a person who is in prison, and doubly so when they have moved to somewhere out of the ordinary, like the prison infirmary. HB 2071 will hopefully provide for a few more families to avoid the hardship of not knowing what is happening as their loved one dies in prison.

The final group consists of the defense attorneys and support staff who represented the people who are now terminally ill. To do a good job defending a person requires you to know them well enough to tell their story to a judge, a jury, or an appellate court. That means that almost every person who dies in prison is someone that some defense attorney knew well. As a profession, it brings us a great deal of comfort to think that HB 2071 could bring some of our clients access to compassionate release in their final days.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Roth  
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