

Robert T. Lilly

Sunset Advisory Commission
11/14/2024

My name is Robert T. Lilly, and I am a member of a **statewide parole working group**. I concur with the testimony of the other members who are speaking/submitting written testimony from this group. I would like to discuss the current parole review process in Texas. I am here to testify that the process, as it exists, is arbitrary and capricious, failing to serve the interests of justice for society and those who have made amends for their crimes.

In 2019, at 49, I was sentenced to 30 years in TDCJ as a habitual felon. Upon arrival, I actively sought information about obtaining parole, driven by my age and the urgency of future opportunities. Despite asking fellow inmates, I found no clear guidance or resources in the Education Department or Law Library, leaving me feeling confused and frustrated.

I felt compelled to testify because, even after being granted parole on my first review, I can't provide a clear example for others. The parole process seems unfair; it feels like a roll of the dice. We go to prison to pay our debt to society, but we aren't informed about what the board actually values as payment.

Fortunately, I found some helpful information by using my creativity and reading books about how to apologize effectively. I also discovered useful details in old legal arguments about parole reform in the Law Library. Additionally, I found insights from statements made by the TDCJ director in the Echo Newspaper. These resources helped me understand how to write my support letter and what to include. The Board of Pardon and Parole should make its expectations clear and easy for everyone to understand by posting them in the Law Library and Education Department. They should also offer classes to teach detainees how to acknowledge their past and demonstrate their progress in gaining insight.

I want to thank you for hearing my plea to you this day, and would hope that you will give deep consideration to these matters and solutions which would be very appreciated.