



To: Co-chairs Winters and Williamson – members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety.

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SEIU Local 503 represents some 750 or so employees who work at Oregon Youth Authority facilities throughout the state. We believe in the mission of maintaining the critical balance in the Juvenile Justice System that allows us to work to make our communities safe and Oregon's youth crime free and productive.

As you well know OYA programs lost over 100 beds in the past biennium to budget cuts. Needless to say, there is no way to excise 10% or 15% - \$27.7 million or \$41.6 million - from OYA's general fund budget of approximately \$277 million without significantly impacting facilities, community programs, assistance to counties and supporting business functions.

OYA management has taken on the development and implementation of the Youth Reformation System (YRS). As staff we recognize the commitment that this has meant. And changing horses on this mid-stream will set back the work that we are trying to accomplish and has the potential to throw away the valuable progress that has been made.

Tough times – mean tough choices – but making decisions that run counter to our present directions seem foolish - if we are to live up to our charge of preparing youth for transitions back to communities and mainstream lives.

We know that OYA is not a “sacred cow” and needs to do its part - but the impacts on the system - and on the investments have made cannot withstand the cuts that are being proposed to this section of the public safety system.

Thank you for your consideration and feel free to contact me with questions on this matter.

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