

# Youth, Rights & Justice

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

To: House Committee on Judiciary, 2013 Oregon Legislature  
From: Mark McKechnie, Executive Director of Youth, Rights & Justice  
Date: May 8, 2013  
Re: Support for Senate Bill 463, Regarding Racial Impact Statements

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Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

Youth, Rights & Justice urges your support of SB 463. Our organization has represented over 50,000 children, youth and parents in the juvenile court system since 1975). The vast majority have been children in foster care. About 20% of our cases involve youth charged with delinquent acts.

It is critical for the Legislature to be informed about the disparate impacts that policy choices can have upon communities of color. Oregon, like the rest of the United States, experiences unfortunate and unacceptable racial disparities in our child welfare and juvenile justice systems. It is important for policy-makers to be informed when they are making choices that have the potential to either redress or exacerbate these disparities.

SB 463 is a common-sense approach that allows a Legislator to request additional, objective information when he or she suspects that a particular piece of legislation related to criminal or juvenile justice or child welfare may have a disproportionate impact on particular racial or ethnic groups. We urge your support.