

LINN COUNTY JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

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February 22, 2013

Dear Co-Chairs Winters and Williamson and members of the committee

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony to the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety regarding HB 5050, the Oregon Youth Authority Budget. I present this written testimony to you with two perspectives, one as a county juvenile department director in Linn County and the other as the chair of the Juvenile Correction Population Forecasting Advisory Committee. We are very fortunate in Oregon to have one of the most comprehensive data collection systems of anywhere in the United States, the Juvenile Justice Information System. County juvenile departments worked closely with OYA and others to develop this system to monitor, track, provide case management capabilities and provide comprehensive reports about the work happening in the Oregon juvenile justice system. Based upon Oregon's own data, the juvenile system has demonstrated the capability to respond to and reduce juvenile crime, saving the system millions of dollars. County juvenile departments along with OYA are in a continuous state of evaluation and improvement to provide the optimal opportunities for young people to be held accountable while making substantive changes in their lives to become productive citizens.

As a county juvenile department director I rely heavily on three funding streams which come through OYA's budget, Diversion, Individualized Services and the Juvenile Crime Prevention Basic Service dollars. While the overall amount of these funding streams is not the most significant portion of OYA's budget they provide essential services for youth in our local community which prevents them from further penetration of the juvenile system and into the care and custody of OYA.

-Diversion dollars are used to pay for FTE which specializes in working with juvenile sexual offenders.

-Goal: Keep the community safe and have the youth complete community based treatment. Keep youth from going to OYA.

-Individualized Service Dollars provide funding for specific things like treatment costs not covered by insurance or the Oregon Health Plan, it can be used to provide assessments of drug and alcohol issues, psychological, sex offender evaluations and other necessary assessments which aid the probation officer in attaining services in a community based setting.

-Goal: Keep youth from going to OYA

-Basic Service Dollars in Linn County are used to help youth with things such as clothing, sports fees, and gas vouchers to get to treatment meetings for youth with no other means.

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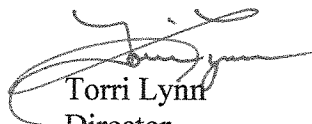
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- Provides a Mental Health Specialist to meet with youth at the Linn Benton Juvenile Detention Facility twice per week. As I'm sure you are aware, mental health issues are having a huge impact on youth in custody settings.
- Supports basic infrastructure of community based services to support youth from further penetrating the juvenile justice system.
- Funds part an Intervention Specialist position which works with middle school age youth generally under the age of fourteen. This position links these young offenders to community resources to aid in their ability to reduce their risk and increase their protective factors.
- Funds a part-time Victim Specialist position to aid victims of juvenile crime. Currently victim services in the juvenile departments receive no other state funding. As you can see this small amount of funding has a large impact on a population of youth which, if services were not available, would be on a straight road towards OYA custody.
- Goal:** Keep youth from going to OYA

OYA is currently leading a monumental project to evaluate and provide better outcomes of youth in the juvenile justice system. The Youth Reformation System (YRS) began with the efforts of the Juvenile Corrections Population Forecasting Advisory Committee to develop a more reliable and predictive forecasting measure. The committee through OYA was able to take advantage of current models developed by Dr. Paul Bellatty, Department of Corrections, to help develop a model which will provide a more accurate measure. The model can then be used to aid legislators in determining the number of beds OYA needs for youth correctional facilities and residential treatment. As work was being done with the population forecast additional tools were developed which then gave way to the notion that as a juvenile system we can be much more predictive of which youth need services at what level and for what length of time. This system could provide huge cost savings down the road for the entire juvenile system as well as for the Department of Corrections. More importantly the opportunity to intervene with youth with the correct service, placement and duration will provide youth more opportunities for success.

County juvenile departments work closely with the OYA to provide a continuum of services from prevention and early intervention to youth correctional facilities. I urge you to support the Governor's Balanced Budget providing the Oregon Youth Authority adequate funding to continue developing evidence based practices. It will in turn provide funding to local juvenile departments to aid in holding youthful offenders accountable, implementing restorative services, and reducing the impact of juvenile crime on victims and our communities. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Torri Lynn
Director

Linn County Juvenile Department