



Building Confidence. Empowering Minds. Making Progress.

February 28, 2013

Dear House Judiciary Committee Members:

We are the executive and clinical directors for Youth Progress Association, and we represent over forty years of combined experience in working with youth with sexualized behaviors. We are writing in support of HB 2552.

Registration requirements increase, rather than decrease, the risk of youth offending in many cases. When we are developing an aftercare plan for youth in the last phase of treatment, we focus on the youth developing stability in his life. **When youth have to register, it makes it difficult for them to find a job, find an apartment, and it is a barrier to developing stable and healthy relationships.**

**Research tells us mandatory registration is not a deterrent to reoffending.** The most effective intervention is believed to consist of a combination of legal sanctions, monitoring, and specialized clinical programming. The youth we serve receive intensive treatment and supervision from the juvenile system. Research shows programs reflecting the collaborative efforts of juvenile justice and mental health professions generally report low re-offense rates.

We have found youth offenders to be a population that is very treatable and that treatment produces good results. **In the last twenty years of working with 425 youth, Youth Progress has experienced ten (10) youth, or 2.4%, who have reoffended.** Overall, the recidivism rate for youth across Oregon Youth Authority programs is roughly 5% within five years of release.

In our treatment programs, youth take responsibility for their behaviors, while at the same time receiving treatment which recognizes that many of them have also been the victims of child maltreatment and exposed to violence or other traumatic experiences. We have witnessed first-hand the difficulties that the youth we serve in our treatment programs have reintegrating back into society. Registration for this age group has far-reaching consequences. It creates significant problems for their families when youth are reunited with them.

**Oregon's registry spreads much too large a net by spending time and resources on youth who are of little or no risk to offend.** Many of those are charged for acts which are exploratory and developmental in nature.

We encourage your support of HB 2552. Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Don Didier LCSW, C.C.S.O.T., Executive Director

Gary Davis PhD, C.C.S.O.T., Director of Clinical Services