

Youth, Rights & Justice

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

To: House Committee on Judiciary, 2014 Oregon Legislature

From: Mark McKechnie, Exec. Director, Youth, Rights & Justice

Date: February 6, 2014

Re: Support for HB 4037

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

Youth, Rights & Justice urges swift passage of HB 4037. The Oregon Legislature has reaffirmed on many occasions its intention to keep juveniles charged or convicted as adults in juvenile facilities and out of adult jails or prisons when it is safe and practical to do so. For many years, Oregon has allowed youth offenders and those convicted as adults of offenses committed as juveniles to remain in OYA facilities up to the age of 25. Most youth convicted under Measure-11 serve their entire sentences at an OYA facility.

In 2013, the Legislature passed HB 3183 with unanimous votes in both chambers. The bill was intended to dramatically reduce, if not end, the practice of conducting the intake of newly convicted youth who are headed ultimately to OYA facilities at a DOC facility (Coffee Creek). The Department of Corrections had already reduced the time from several days to a matter of hours, in many cases. Knowing this is the case, it is more efficient and better for youth that they are transferred directly to OYA facilities, particularly when they have been housed in juvenile detention facilities prior to sentencing,

HB 4037 will hopefully remove the remaining practical barriers to fulfilling the intent of the Oregon Legislature by allowing agreements among the Department of Corrections, County Sheriffs, Juvenile Departments and the Oregon Youth Authority to allow the direct transfer of youth convicted as adults directly from juvenile detention facilities to OYA facilities, without the need for youth to undergo intake procedures in a DOC facility first.

Because the Legislature has already provided a very clear policy direction on this issue, Youth, Rights & Justice urges your support to reaffirm your previous votes on this important issue. We urge swift passage of HB 4037.

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