



Hundreds of Police Chiefs, Sheriffs,

February 12, 2014

**Written Testimony submitted to the Oregon House Education Committee
By Martha Brooks, State Director, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids**

Chair Gelser and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for taking my written testimony. It is with great regret that I cannot be at the hearing in person. I unfortunately have another obligation at this same time that cannot be changed. Therefore, please accept these comments from Fight Crime: Invest in Kids in opposition to HB 4134 dealing with Juvenile Crime Prevention Funds.

My name is Martha Brooks and I am the State Director of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Fight Crime: Invest In Kids is a bipartisan, nonprofit anti-crime organization comprised of nearly 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys and victims of violence from across the United States with over 120 members in Oregon.

We are in opposition of HB 4134 and the changes that would be made to Juvenile Crime Prevention (JCP) funding and ask that you do not pass this bill. This measure, if implemented, would drastically change the structure of juvenile justice in the state.

We urge the House Education Committee to slow this procedure and give a “due process” of what is the best way to fund juvenile crime prevention. We support the appointment of a workgroup committee that includes a broad base of members to review JCP funding. **We are not in support of any portion of HB 4134 or any proposed amendments moving forward prior to the workgroup recommendations.** Should a workgroup be developed and appointed then the recommendations of the workgroup should be considered prior to any changes to JCP process.

In the debate over these funds, I am reminded that in the late 1990’s, then Governor John Kitzhaber realized a vision that would bring juvenile crime prevention to the forefront. He even celebrated his accomplishments in a letter to Ann Lander’s published on August 14, 2000 in her nationally syndicated column.

“...[It] is correct when [said] we need to invest in our at risk youth before they get into trouble. The best way to prevent juvenile crime and give our young people the opportunity for successful, productive lives is not to lock them up, but steer them in the right direction before serious trouble starts. Accordingly, I have made juvenile crime prevention a priority.” ~ Governor John Kitzhaber, August 14, 2000

From 1999 forward, Oregon has been a leader in juvenile crime prevention. The principle of preventing crime became law and funding was put behind it. Oregon Juvenile Departments, other elected officials, law enforcement leaders, and communities conducted a comprehensive review of the system. A statewide task force at the leadership of the Attorney General and over 500 stakeholders from all 36 counties crafted a system for prevention and early intervention.

The process developed a system that not only redefined the philosophy and purposes of the juvenile system, but also developed a system across ALL of Oregon that focused on prevention and early intervention. Over 5,000 high at-risk youth are served each biennium with essential services that address multiple issues that include school, peers, family, behavioral, substance abuse, antisocial behaviors and more.

Our state took the lead in a ground breaking system that has for the last 15 years been successful and steady with outcomes that have dramatically improved and reduced behavior and risk problems, juvenile crime, and re-offense.

And the results are impressive. Approximately 50% of all JCP youth decreased “dynamic risk indicators” at reassessment and had an increase in “protective indicators.” More impressive, NPC Research found through an evaluation of the programs and services that youth with criminal referrals prior to participating in JCP prevention programs and services decreased their subsequent rate of referrals dramatically compared to the rate prior to JCP involvement. The proportion of youth with no criminal referrals post JCP was 89%. The long-term goal of JCP programs is to reduce crime and they do.

As a reminder, these resources are only one of a handful of state funded programs and services with a history of evidence behind them that they reduce and prevent crime both now and in the future. Even Oregonian editorial columnist Robert Landauer stated he “saw a healthy dividend on the [State’s] investment in stopping trouble early” in reference to the JCP system.

This system is exactly what was needed 15 years ago and exactly what is needed today - youth development, juvenile crime prevention and juvenile crime intervention. The communities have done their due diligence as has the state. The system is working. The youth that Fight Crime: Invest in Kids members encounter every day, benefit from JCP funds. And many of those youth who benefit are never seen in “the judicial system” again.

The loss of the funds to even one county juvenile department would be detrimental. The loss to several or all county juvenile departments would be devastating to our entire juvenile system and the citizens of this state.

The members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids ask that we build on the great success we already have through the JCP programs and services. We should not start over. We ask you to vote no on HB 4134.

Thank you.

NPC Research – Juvenile Crime Prevention Program Evaluation 2009-11
http://www.npcresearch.com/Files/JCP_Statewide_Summary_0212.pdf

Attached PDF: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Sign-on Letter in opposition to HB 4134 – Sent to all members of the Legislature January 27, 2014

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*Hundreds of Police Chiefs, Sheriffs,
Prosecutors, other Law Enforcement
Leaders, and Violence Survivors
Preventing Crime and Violence*

January 27, 2014

Dear Oregon State Senator/Representative:

As law enforcement leaders, we are concerned both with public safety and the long-term strength of our communities. Since 1998, the Juvenile Crime Prevention (JCP) Funds have supported targeted interventions for youth who have been identified as at-risk of entering or becoming more involved in the juvenile justice system. These programs are some of the best tools we have in identifying and treating at-risk youth before they become hardened criminals.

However, we are concerned by the funding proposal recently developed and approved by the Youth Development Council (YDC) and presented as HB4134. **We are in opposition to this measure.** If implemented, the proposal would drastically change the structure of juvenile justice in the state. The implications and ramifications of such a proposal must be broadly explored before these funds are reallocated.

The YDC proposal would dismantle evidence-based programs that have provided incredibly positive outcomes and have been subject to outside evaluation. Fifty percent of all JCP youth showed a decrease in measured risk factors, and 84 percent of youth with prior criminal referrals did not have an additional criminal referral in the year after starting JCP services. Along with these crime outcomes come drastic reductions in aggressive behavior at school and a 45 percent increase in significant school attachment. To eliminate the programs that fostered these outcomes would be a disservice to our youth, school safety and our state.

Law enforcement leaders know that the best way to prevent future crime is to intervene early, before at-risk youth offend or become repeat offenders. Our jails are filled with people who would have benefitted from the types of programs JCP funds support.

The legislature needs to take a careful look at the positive outcomes brought about by the current funding structure before deciding on the YDC proposal, and there must be broader discussion about the effects proposed changes would have on the state's juvenile justice system. Anything less would be a disservice to our youth and a detriment to the long-term safety of our communities.

As law enforcement leaders in the state who deal with the lasting impacts of juvenile crime, we ask you to reject this proposal and leave the JCP dollars intact.

Sincerely,

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Fight Crime: Invest in Kids is a membership organization of law enforcement leaders and crime victims under the umbrella non-profit Council for a Strong America

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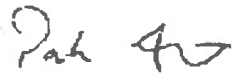
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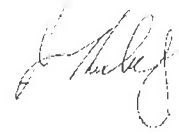
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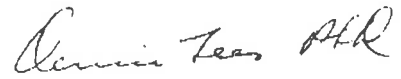
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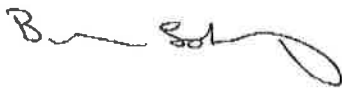
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