

# Youth, Rights & Justice

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

To: Senate Committee on Rules, 2014 Oregon Legislature

From: Mark McKechnie, Executive Director, Youth, Rights & Justice

Date: February 27, 2014

RE: Support for House Version of HB 4156-A

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Chair Rosenbaum and Members of the Committee:

Youth, Rights & Justice has represented over 50,000 clients in the juvenile court system since 1975, including children and parents in juvenile dependency cases. We understand the concerns that the Department of Human Services and the Department of Justice have regarding legal representation for caseworkers at various court hearings, which prompted this bill. We understand that the goal of this bill is to avoid confusion and maintain the status quo until additional work can be done to enact permanent legislation in 2015.

We worked quickly and collaboratively with DHS, the Office of Public Defense Services, the Judicial Department and the Governor's office to develop the amendments adopted by the House Rules Committee and passed unanimously by the House of Representatives. We continue to support this version.

We were not aware that the Department of Justice had concerns about the version passed by the House. We are concerned that the proposed -3 amendments would have statewide consequences that are unintended, undesirable and very expensive. We understand that the problem this bill tries to address is really only limited to a very small number of counties.

We encourage you to pass the existing version of HB 4156-A without any additional amendments. This legislation will sunset on June 30, 2015. The interested stakeholders will necessarily need to craft a more permanent solution before that time.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues.