



C. LANE BORG
Executive Director

METROPOLITAN PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES, INC.

February 25, 2015

The Honorable Chip Shields, Co-Chair
The Honorable Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs and members of the Committee:

This letter is in support of SB 5542, the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) budget and bond funding for OYA's 10-Year Strategic Facilities Plan. OYA protects the public by holding youth accountable and providing a safe environment for evidenced-based treatment services, education and reformation.

This year marks the 20th year of the implementation of BM 11, a harsh and draconian response to crime, especially for juvenile offenders. I have railed against this response to crime for most of my 30 years as a lawyer. But one good thing that came out of BM 11 was SB 1 of 1995 that created the Oregon Youth Authority.

While I would not advise a state that does not have a BM 11 law for juveniles to enact one, I am convinced that if we are to have such an approach we absolutely need a fully funded OYA to humanely support and guide these children as they develop. The programing provided has demonstrated that kids change and these young offenders are not only the sum of their worst act.

So, simply put, as long as we are going to have BM 11 for youth we need a fully funded OYA for hope.

Sincerely,

C. Lane Borg
Executive Director
Metropolitan Public Defenders, Inc