



March 29, 2015

Human Services and Housing Committee
c/o Taisheka Broom – Committee Assistant
<taisheka.broom@state.or.us>

Chair Alissa Keny-Guyer; Vice Chairs Carla Piluso and Duane Stark; and members of the Committee – my name is Rolando Ramirez and I am the Latino-Hispanic Services Coordinator for OYA’s Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations. I am also the President of our OYA Local 415 of the Service Employees International Union – Local 503. SEIU represents approximately 800 Oregon Youth Authority workers at the various campuses statewide. Our members are life counselors; care coordinators; support staff; analytic staff and folks that maintain the physical plant facilities. We are very proud of the work we do with Oregon Youth in a program of justice, reformation; personal growth and development.

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In reference to HB 2706 - a measure that would seek to legislate the use of “Isolation” for juvenile detainees in Oregon Detention facilities - OYA staff are presently involved in discussions at all our facilities about this issue. We know that finding some resolutions and protocols for the use of Isolation – if, when, where and how? ... are of utmost importance for the Youth Justice world in Oregon and nationwide. As the staff on the ground we are very concerned about how they are deployed in each and every case. Staffing levels are of utmost important to detention facilities. And as counselors and workers at OYA we are fully involved in seeking successful outcomes with youth and these important issues .

We want to highlight that the agency has submitted a budget for a 10-year plan that will better support the ability of staff to effectively work with youth by providing appropriate spaces for treatment, educational, recreational and vocational needs. Significantly, the plan creates a glide path for OYA to reduce the density of youth housed in individual living units and if supported by the legislature would allow the agency to maintain current staffing levels and enhance the staff to youth ratio,

allowing our members to be more effective in the direct care work they perform for the state of Oregon.

Let us add that we are pretty sure that a 'one size fits all answer' for the issues around isolating youth – is not the right way to go. Please know that our members are engaged in figuring out these solutions. Come visit us and our facilities anytime or contact us for further discussions.

Sincerely,

Rolando Ramirez, President OYA Local 415
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