



April 8, 2015

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
HB 2907: Relating to youth recidivism**

Clackamas County opposes HB 2907: The Board of County Commissioners opposes HB 2907, which aims to establish the definition of “recidivism” for the purpose of tracking and compiling data regarding recidivism of youth and youth offenders. While defining recidivism is an important component to understanding the efficiency within a criminal justice system, defining recidivism in the juvenile system to align with the adult criminal justice system is not in accordance with evidence based practices that have been proven effective across the nation.

HB 2907 proposes expanding the definition of recidivism to include “arrest data,” which focuses on police behavior, community priorities, and funding. The juvenile justice system operates with more attention given to the exit, rather than the entrance, of juvenile offenders. Consideration also is given to post-juvenile system education, employment, and positive youth development outcomes as equally important metrics for tracking juvenile recidivism.

The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) and the Oregon Juvenile Department Directors’ Association (OJDDA) are currently collaborating to adopt definitions of recidivism and to establish a recidivism reporting system for youth offenders, as directed by ORS 420A.012. HB 2907 would preempt this state-mandated process by adopting a system that has not been approved by the OYA or OJDDA as being effective in evaluating the successful transition of youth offenders in our communities.

The Clackamas County Juvenile Department (CCJD), along with the 35 other county juvenile departments and OYA, utilize the Juvenile Justice Information System for comprehensive data collection and evaluation of juvenile services. This System, recognized as a national model, is a reliable and valid database that should be the primary source of information for any juvenile recidivism definition. Since 2008, CCJD has used this data system to track a reduction of chronic offenders from 34% to 17.2%, a reduction in recidivism from 22.8% to 17.4%, and an increase in restitution paid to victims from 81.6% to 100%.

We urge a “no” vote on HB 2907, and instead recommend continued support for the collaborative efforts of OYA and OJDDA in seeking to define a recidivism measure that aligns with best practices in juvenile justice.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.