



Every Black male will have sufficient access and opportunity to the factors that lead to health, safety, and success.

Steering Committee:

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April 9, 2015

Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
House of Representatives Judiciary Committee
900 Court St. NE Hearing Rm 343
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Opposition to House Bill 2907

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

Black Male Achievement Portland (BMA) is concerned about House Bill 2907, which arises out of the report prepared by Clackamas County District Attorney John Foote and ex. District Attorney Chuck French. We are specifically concerned that neither of these efforts address, *at all*, the significant racial disparities in the juvenile criminal justice system. Ignoring these disparities calls into question the credibility and validity of the entire report and the resulting legislative efforts as well.

BMA is a collaborative led by a Steering Committee of Black men who represent over 20 organizations; non-profit, for profit, and government agencies. It focuses on the removal of barriers to accessing high quality and equitable employment, education, public safety, and livable communities on behalf of Black men and boys. BMA acts as a convener, facilitator, policy guide, and collective voice. It obtains data, pushes for policy change, increases program scale, and exerts influence and change, to create awareness and improve outcomes for Black men and boys.

BMA opposes House Bill 2907 for three reasons:

First, some counties already have significant disproportionate minority contact when it comes to arrest rates for youth of color. The definition of recidivism contained in House Bill 2907 will further institutionalize racial bias in our juvenile justice system because it simply ignores that such bias exists. To ensure an equitable way of measuring recidivism it is necessary to consider the effects of institutional racism. We oppose House Bill 2907 because it does not take these effects into account.

Secondly, the LEDS system is an unreliable source of arrest data and will lead to inaccurate recidivism rates. These rates are likely to be overinflated because more people are recorded as being arrested in the LEDS system than actually are arrested. We oppose House Bill 2907 because the method of calculating arrest proposed therein will lead to overinflated recidivism rates.

Finally, the proposed definition of recidivism focuses on police behavior and does not capture the entire juvenile justice system. Other methods of tracking recidivism, such as at the conclusion of the juvenile system involvement, and those related to positive youth development outcomes such as educational attainment and employment, need to be considered. Using a more collaborative process we can consider these methods as we work towards a better definition for recidivism. We oppose House Bill 2907 because these methods were clearly not taken into consideration by its drafters.

For these reasons, BMA Portland opposes the definition of recidivism proposed in House Bill 2907. We ask the committee to oppose House Bill 2907, and vote not to send it to the House floor for further debate.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the BMA through Dante J. James at dante.james@portlandoregon.gov, or at 503-823-4433.