



To: House Committee on Judiciary, 2015 Oregon Legislature
From: Julia Meier, Director, Coalition of Communities of Color
Date: April 9, 2015
Re: Opposition to HB 2907

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

The Coalition of Communities of Color opposes HB 2907.

Adopting a definition based on arrest, rather than adjudication will corrupt and inflate current recidivism statistics based on nationally recognized models and evidence based practices. Youth recidivism data under HB 2907's definition will be made incomparable to historical data of youth recidivism and will create a barrier for the successful transition of our youth. The proposed redefinition is misleading and would be in conflict with the Constitutional presumption of innocence.

The mission of the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity. Formed in 2001, the CCC is an alliance of 20 culturally-specific community based organizations with representation from six communities of color: African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American and Slavic.

The CCC spent the last seven years on a comprehensive research study on communities of color and racial inequities in our region. While the frequency of crime for juvenile offenders is on the decline, research shows significant patterns of disproportionality within these systems based on race and ethnicity. Many factors contribute to racial inequities in the justice system: inadequate preventative social services, lower socio-economic status, law enforcement practices and policies, statutory mandates, communication barriers, inadequate cross-cultural training, lack of culturally appropriate resources, placements, and services, and bias of decision makers.

Youth from communities of color also face disproportionately high rates of police contacts and arrests. Data will be skewed when these youth are not subsequently found to have committed an offense by a juvenile or criminal court. HB 2907's new definition will exacerbate the racial and ethnic inequities in the justice system by inhibiting our ability to address factors leading to our youth's over-representation.

The Coalition of Communities of Color urges the House Committee on Judiciary to vote no on HB 2907.

Carmen Rubio
Co-Chair, CCC
Executive Director, Latino Network

Gerald Deloney
Co-Chair, CCC
Director of Program Advancement,
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Matt Morton
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