



April 17, 2015

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.

As I wrote you on March 29th when this committee heard HB 2706 - 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.

We agree that trying to reduce the use of “Isolation” in youth facilities is a worthy endeavor. I am here to repeat in person that measures that would seek to legislate or codify it’s use for juvenile detainees in Oregon Detention facilities appear to us to be premature and unnecessary right now.

Premature - because as our agency has testified - there are discussion going on within OYA and with outside organizations and individuals - who can bring a keen eye and experience to the process of making change on this topic - an external stakeholder analysis process.

My previous testimony discussed various factors that are at play in the use of isolation in OYA facilities. And that as someone who is on the ground working with our staff and youth who are involved in isolation – and especially youth of color – I will be happy to answer questions about what we are facing.

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Please know that our members are very much engaged in figuring out and being a part of these solutions. Come visit us our facilities and feel free to contact us for further discussions.

Sincerely,

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