



OREGON
Alliance
of Children's Programs

Streamlining Criminal Background Checks

4 June 2015

General Government Subcommittee for Ways & Means
Co-Chairs Senator Steiner-Hayward and Representative Smith and
Committee Members,

I am Janet Arenz, Executive Director of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs. We are a nonprofit association of forty-five providers who deliver \$223 million in services to children and families each year. We represent over 100,000 children throughout Oregon. These children receive services in areas that include prevention, runaway and homeless programs, mental health, addiction recovery, child welfare, foster care, developmental disabilities and juvenile justice.

We are supportive of HB 2250, which streamlines the criminal background check processes, creating consistency and flexibility.

Child safety is our top priority, and healing children who have suffered traumatic events, or who are at risk of being in danger, is the mission of our members. This is a vulnerable population, and we support higher standards for their safety in treatment programs.

Because our members -- and the children we serve -- cross many sectors, we see a myriad of disparities, duplication, and processes that need to be re-crafted for continuity and efficiency. Criminal background checks is one of those areas.

The flexibility in the bill which allows the background check authority to consider an applicant's circumstances is appropriate. Age, mitigating circumstances, accomplishments and other information may allow a qualified person to be considered for a job, while not interfering in the power to refuse employment for an unfit person who would have been identified on the "forever crime list." Even mandatory exclusions have not been effective at completely ameliorating bad people from access to children. Allowing some consideration of rehabilitated people doesn't jeopardize the authority to exclude a person.

We are also happy to see the amendment which insures that Oregon continues to provide a process so that an aggrieved person may challenge an initial fitness determination.

Thank you for receiving these comments.
Janet Arenz

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