

Testimony in Support of SB 5042

**Submitted to the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
By Andrew Ko, Executive Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice
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To: The Honorable Jackie Winters, Co-Chair
The Honorable Duane Stark, Co-Chair and
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

Partnership of Safety and Justice (PSJ) is a statewide, non-profit organization that has worked to reform public safety and criminal justice policy in Oregon since 1999. We advance responses to crime that ensure justice, equity, accountability, and healing to achieve safe and strong communities.

Partnership for Safety and Justice supports passage of SB 5042, Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) budget and bond funding for OYA's 10-Year Strategic Facilities Plan. OYA plays a central role in protecting Oregonians, both by ensuring that young people who have committed criminal acts are held accountable and by providing a safe environment for those same youth to receive evidenced-based treatment, education, and social programs.

Over the last budget cycle, and with the support of the Legislature, OYA has redeployed its existing funding to advance implementation of its Youth Reformation System, a predictive analysis model to inform decisions at all levels of Oregon's juvenile justice system. The model uses juvenile data in Oregon's unique Juvenile Justice Information System to create better outcomes for youth and ensure that they return to their communities prepared for productive, healthy, crime-free lives. In this way, the Youth Reformation System also helps reduce victimization and decrease taxpayer expense.

OYA also has continued to advance its comprehensive culture change initiative known as Positive Human Development. PHD is Oregon's strength-based take on the developmental model of Juvenile Justice, a nationally recognized best practice. Under the PHD approach, high expectations and accountability are achieved by ensuring safety and security for OYA youth and staff in an environment of caring and supportive relationships.

Finally, pursuant to legislative direction in the 2013 session, OYA began implementation of its 10-year facilities strategic plan to consolidate and update the physical environments that serve Oregon's most at-risk youth. These projects bring the agency's facilities in line with research-based best practices that deliver better outcomes for youth and increase public safety.

I urge to you do everything possible to ensure the continuing success of these essential OYA programs. This includes denying cuts to County Juvenile Department funding streams. These funds for county-level programs have supported highly effective interventions, and reductions would profoundly compromise the safety of communities throughout Oregon.

It is imperative that the state maintain funding for both OYA and the County Juvenile Departments to prevent future crime, educate system-involved youth, and ensure economic opportunity for these young people as they enter adulthood in Oregon.