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The Honorable Jackie Winters, Co-Chair
The Honorable Duane Stark, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
900 Court Street
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Winters and Stark and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you in support of SB 5042, the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) budget and bond funding for the continuation of OYA's 10-Year Strategic Facilities Plan. As you know, OYA protects the public by holding youth accountable and providing a safe environment for evidenced-based treatment services, education and reformation.

Over the last budget cycle, and with the support of the Legislature, OYA has redeployed its existing funding to move forward implementation of the 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 in terms of returning to society ready to take part in a productive, healthy, crime-free life. The model, I am informed, reduces victimization and reduces taxpayer expense.

OYA has also continued and enhanced its comprehensive culture change initiative known as Positive Human Development (PHD). PHD is Oregon's strengths-based approach to the developmental model of Juvenile Justice, a nationally recognized best practice. With the PHD model, high expectations and accountability are the outgrowth of safety and security and caring and supportive relationships. Maintaining funding levels for OYA will help the agency continue these important efforts benefitting the youth they serve while focusing on public safety.

Finally, pursuant to legislative direction in the 2013 session, OYA began implementation of its 10 year facilities strategic plan focused on consolidating and updating the facilities that serve Oregon's most at risk youth. These projects bring the agency's physical environments in line with best practices that research shows deliver positive outcomes for youth and public safety.

I urge you to do all that you can to continue OYA's momentum via appropriate funding levels. It is important that Oregon maintain the OYA budget for public safety and reformation and allow OYA to continue the work its doing that will continue to protect the public and have meaningful impacts for education, prevention and economic development for Oregon.

I look forward to continuing the productive partnership between OYA and my office, and I ask that you support their good work rehabilitating youth, keeping them safe, and enhancing public safety in the years ahead.

Best Regards,

ROD UNDERHILL
District Attorney
Multnomah County