



# Oregon

## Office of Public Defense Services

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February 22, 2017

Senator Jackie Winters, Co-Chair  
Representative Duane Stark, Co-Chair  
Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee  
Oregon State Legislature

Dear Co-Chairs Winters and Stark and Members of the Subcommittee,

We are writing to express support for the budget request submitted by the Oregon Youth Authority (“OYA”). OYA is a critical partner in promoting public safety and enabling youth to successfully return to their communities. OYA delivers services which help youth succeed in treatment, and develop life-skills that enable and promote future success. The agency indicates that seventy-four percent of youth discharged from OYA custody remain crime-free for at least three years following discharge. This reduced recidivism is a critical link in controlling the growth of the public defense caseload.

Funding for OYA will also assist the Public Defense Services Commission in achieving its mission. As you know, the Commission has struggled to provide adequate case rates, in part because the funding provided is insufficient to fund the number of cases in the system. Public defense providers take on caseloads that are far too high, compromising the quality of representation. By reducing the number of cases in the system, OYA can potentially help to make room to increase the rates PDSC could pay for each case. Services that ensure reduced recidivism give Oregon an opportunity to build a more efficient and effective public safety system.

It should also be noted that OYA staff regularly provide input to OPDS regarding the quality of public defense services offered in counties around the state. Their feedback is a critical component in our effort to improve the quality of representation provided to kids in the delinquency system.

Thank you for your interest in ensuring the continued efficiency and viability of the public safety system.

Sincerely,

Amy Miller  
OPDS Deputy General Counsel