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Mark R. McCrary

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, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs and members of the Committee:

I am writing today to encourage your support of SB 5042, the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) budget and bond funding for the continuation of OYA's 10-Year Strategic Facilities Plan. My statewide leadership cohort was recently honored to be part of a tour of MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility. I was impressed with the vision of the staff leadership and the opportunities that they have created for these young men.

In addition to the program offerings, I was very impressed with the commitment and desire of these young men in turning their lives around. There was an eagerness to avoid repeating past mistakes, a commitment to developing their job skills and they presented themselves with a professional demeanor and engaged us in articulate and thoughtful conversation.

The Positive Human Development Initiative empowers those in OYA's custody with employable skills for when they are released, which I believe will help reduce recidivism. Imagine the opportunity for these young adults that, upon release, will have the skillsets to earn a livable wage rather than being thrown out of the system without skills or hope for the future.

The Youth Reformation System is able to identify lifestyles and behaviors that will allow OYA to tailor resources to the needs of our youth and avoid an inefficient response system that is punitive in favor of a program that encourages better life coping skills and return to productive lives.

Finally, OYA understands the needs of facilities beyond bricks and mortar. The leadership views a symbiotic relationship between facilities and the needs of those in custody. They renovated storage buildings into mechanic training facilities and provide technology resources so that the young men can get a degree from one of Oregon's universities giving them yet another opportunity to succeed. The consolidation plan makes sense in order to maximize infrastructure needs and OYA is on top of making sure the transition is successful for staff, the youth and the community.

If you haven't had the opportunity to visit, I highly recommend seeing for yourself the impact that OYA is making. Meanwhile, I encourage you to support SB 5042 and the momentum of OYA's service to the state and communities of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Mark R. McCrary
Executive Director