



Jackson Street Youth Services

PO Box 285

Corvallis, OR 97339-0285

March 13, 2017

Re: public hearing March 15, 8:30 am, Ann Craig for Senate Bills 5516 and 5517.

Ways and Means Sub-committee on Education members,

I am the Executive Director of Jackson Street Youth Services, a nonprofit organization that serves homeless and at risk youth, ages 10 to 24, in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. I am writing to **advocate for maintaining the Youth Development Council budget at the current service level of funding** for the next biennium with the plan to increase funding in the near future for this relatively new effort to address a major cause of low graduation rates in Oregon.

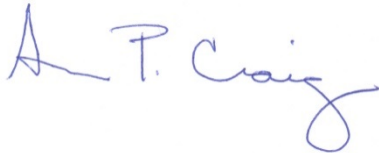
YDC funds have targeted and made a major difference for disconnected youth who are often not on track to graduate from high school, access employment, or live productive lives. These YDC funded programs, like ours, use best practices proven for desired outcomes including community collaboration which is key to effectively serving these youth.

Nick was a 17 year old Linn County homeless youth couch-surfing his way through high school. During senior year, his grades started dropping as he lost motivation to graduate. The thought of life after high school was terrifying. Nick was referred to our outreach program to help him focus his studies and plan for the future. He began weekly meetings with a case manager who offered him encouragement and support, helped with housing, and held him accountable for getting his school-work done. Together with staff from Nick's high school, they crafted a plan to get Nick into a summer job program. The company would pay him good money to work for them for three months, with all expenses covered, but he had to finish high school first. This new hope for the future boosted Nick's motivation to graduate on time with his class and he did it! Nick now has a high school degree and a positive record of employment.

- Nick is just an example of the many youth we have been able to support because of our YDC grant.
- Just last fiscal year, we have provided support to over 150 youth like those we provided to Nick.
- 100% of youth who needed emergency shelter are engaged with school by the time they exit shelter to a more stable living situation.
- Our organization more than doubled funding we received from YDC to fully support the services outlined in our proposal from the last biennium.

The youth we serve are at a great disadvantage. Without our programs, they will become even more unlikely to graduate from high school, get connected to job skills, and will instead end up costing the state much more later in their lives, and more importantly, these youth will not have the support they need for a positive future. Please maintain these critical funds for programs that are efficiently and effectively helping youth to help themselves attain education and job skills for their and Oregon's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann P. Craig". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "y" at the end of the name.

Ann P. Craig