

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 82**  
**Submitted to the House Committee on Judiciary**  
**By Shannon Wight, Deputy Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice**  
**April 25, 2017**

Chair Barker, members of the committee:

My name is Shannon Wight and I am the Deputy Director at Partnership for Safety and Justice. Partnership of Safety and Justice is a statewide, non-profit organization that has worked in Oregon for since 1999. We advance policy solutions to crime that ensure justice, equity, accountability, and healing to achieve safe and strong communities.

Those values drive our work, which is why I am here today on behalf of Partnership for Safety (PSJ) and Justice in support of SB 82.

As a representative of PSJ, I have served on the Oregon Youth Authority's (OYA) Use of Isolation Advisory Committee started in 2015. The advisory committee meets quarterly to provide oversight and feedback on OYA's efforts to reduce the use of isolation in its facilities.

It is well established that the use of isolation is harmful to the physical and mental health of youth and can result in aggravating existing mental health issues, particularly for youth who have histories of trauma and abuse. For these reasons, Oregon and other states are working to limit its use and develop more promising approaches to managing youth behavior.

Isolation is standard practice in juvenile and adult facilities as a means of removing a person acting out from the group environment. While it may have served institutions in managing behavior in the short term, use of isolation runs counter to the Oregon Youth Authority's goals of reformation.

Leadership and staff at the Oregon Youth Authority, with advice from the Use of Isolation Advisory Committee, are in an on-going process to shift the culture of their facilities away from the use of isolation as a punishment. These shifts in culture and practice do not come quickly, as staff must be provided with alternative skills and tools for managing situations in a new way.

Partnership for Safety and Justice commends the hard and successful work of the Oregon Youth Authority is changing their use of isolation and practices and supports SB 82 as a step in the right direction towards more effective juvenile justice practices.

PSJ supports SB 82 and we encourage favorable vote.