

Service Employees International Union, Local 503, OPEU

1730 Commercial Street – SE; PO Box 12159, Salem, OR 97309-0159

Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

May 15, 2017

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Jackie Winters and Representative Duane Stark and members of the Committee:

Please find this letter in support of increases to the present Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) 2017-19 budget and bond funding, and for the continuation of OYA's 10-Year Strategic Facilities Plan.

As we wrote in February for the first go-round hearings on HB 5042 - SEIU Local 415 represents some 750 or so employees who work at Oregon Youth Authority facilities throughout the state as a critical part of the Juvenile Justice System. We believe in our mission to make our communities safe and Oregon's youth crime free and productive. We are concerned that OYA's mission is in jeopardy.

We are concerned that last month's Ways and Mean's co-chairs' budget left our agency at an incredible disadvantage – not only with the proposed closure of the North Coast Youth facility in Warrenton – but with budget holes that will be difficult to fill without more support.

In summary, as you will hear from others – the total add-backs needed equal \$5.4 million for this biennium. Even with these add-backs, OYA's funding level for '17-'19 will still be \$18.7 million, or 5.7 percent, below the current service level. Even with these add-backs we will still see the closure of the North Coast facility this fall and the elimination of 160 residential beds from our capacity. Our members feel that this is unacceptable.

Without this \$5.4 million in funding, OYA will not be able to meet its current obligations and service levels. The add-backs proposed in the Governor's budget will help us continue the very important pilot program at the Young Women's Transition Center at Oak Creek in Albany; continue the work of Skills Development Coordinator Staff who are key to reducing the isolation of youth in facilities; and keep several critical infrastructure staff roles in our professional standards, office, equity and inclusion, HR and IS.

We know from past discussions with committee members that these are programs that you also agree are important to maintain. Let's not lose the momentum that was gained over the last budget cycles with our agency's work. We also recognize these are tough times that require difficult decisions, but you can count on SEIU to be supportive of your processes to raise the revenue needed to not only support Oregon youth, but also the many other state programs that are facing cuts.

Doug Dryden, President – Local 415 – (Oak Creek, Albany)
Janet Ferris, Vice President – Local 415 (Camp Tillamook & Tillamook YCF)
Gloria Soja, Secretary/Treasurer – Local 415 (Central Office, Salem)
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