

05/19/2017

Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature

RE: Testimony for Senate Bill 5530

Dear Committee Members,

Please accept the attached document as testimony I'll be presenting in support of Klamath County's request for assistance with funding the Klamath Youth Inspiration Program facility through Senate Bill 5530.

Thank you,

Kelley Minty Morris,
Chair, Klamath County Commissioners

05/19/17

Testimony for Senate Bill 5530 from Commissioner Kelley Minty Morris

Co-Chairs and Committee members, I'm Kelley Minty Morris, Klamath County Commissioner. I serve as the liaison Commissioner to our Juvenile Department and champion both saving money and saving lives! I'm requesting your support to replace the oldest juvenile detention facility east of the Cascades with a residential treatment center for female youth from OYA and DHS in Southern Oregon. Klamath County is committed to this project, and hope you will partner with us with \$10,910,000 from SB 5530 to expand the Klamath Youth Inspiration (or YIP) program.

What does it take to inspire youth? If you are a parent, particularly of a teen, you've probably asked yourself that question! The answer isn't a new I-phone, at least not for the girls we work with at the Klamath YIP center, the girls in our care desperately need responsible adults around them and a safe environment, increasing their number of protective, therapeutic factors and reducing cycles of criminal behavior.

Staff of our aging facility recently dealt with a van full of intimidating men in our parking lot, clearly looking to break one of our young ladies out of our care. This young woman had been taken by Portland Police, rescued out of a van littered with a floor full of syringes. She was strung out and being sexually trafficked. The men trying to get to her were likely the same ones involved in the trafficking. Staff were able to get them to leave, able to keep this young person in our care. You may not always think of a juvenile treatment facility as a desirable place to be, but I'm grateful this young woman had strong support around her as part of the YIP program. The program provides gender responsive therapy, intensive mental health treatment, trauma informed care, and even morning yoga sessions! This is a chance for these teenage girls to reclaim and often discover their identity, understand the consequences of their actions, and to start directing their own lives.

Comments made by girls to staff include - "this is the first time I've had my own room" and "I don't know why some of the girls complain about the food; before I was here I was eating out of a dumpster."

I appreciate the struggle between competing, worthy needs. You make these tough calls; I don't envy it. You can feel confident this project reduces the number of women escalating into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. We have an effective model; help us grow the model, double the number of clients from OYA and DHS, and reduce future corrections budgets.

We've learned this program SAVES money. When you calculate the saving from diverting girls away from Oregon Youth Authority Corrections, in a conservative estimate, in just one year, we estimate savings of about 5 million dollars for the almost 50 youth we've served. We've kept 85 percent of the OYA and DHS clients we've served *out of juvenile detention and corrections*. That's a huge win, one you can help grow, investing in the Klamath YIP project and increasing the saving!

Supporting this project helps keep young girls from escalating into the juvenile and criminal justice systems, providing a two-to-one return on investment in ways we can *quantify*, and an even more significant impact in ways we *can't*.