



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 28, 2019

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senator Kim Thatcher, Co-Chair

Re: **SB 968** – Sentences for Juvenile Offenders – **Support**

This bill adds a new provision to the juvenile code that the court may not impose life imprisonment on a person under 18 at the time of the crime. The court will consider mitigating factors such as age, intelligence, peer or family pressure, history of trauma or juvenile offenses. The court will order a mental health evaluation by a psychiatrist who works with adolescents. The League appreciates that the courts will consider these factors in sentencing.

The bill stipulates that the person who is convicted as a juvenile is eligible for release on parole after 15 years. The required hearing will consider the diminished culpability of minors, the history of juvenile offenses, trauma and the mental health diagnosis. If the person has demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation, a release date may be set. If not, the hearing may be postponed 2 years but not more than ten years.

The League believes services for juveniles should include appropriate evaluation, treatment and placement for those already in the system. The desired outcome is that juvenile offenders be rehabilitated and returned to the community as contributing members of the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norman Turrill".

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Nibler".

Karen Nibler
LWVOR Social Policy Coordinator