

# YWCA IS ON A MISSION

March 28 , 2019

Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 State Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the YWCA of Greater Portland, I am writing to express our support for a suite of bills that are under consideration by your committee that seek to improve our criminal justice system for youth in Oregon: SBs 696, 966, 968 and 1008. As one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the nation, with 2.6 million members across 300 local associations, the YWCA of Greater Portland has been serving Oregonians for over 110 years, while evolving to meet the changing needs of the women we serve. However, our core mission has not changed: eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, dignity and freedom for all.

One of our five key areas of work is the Oregon Center for Justice Involved Women & Their Children at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, which includes the Family Preservation Project and the Family Resource Center. In our effort to help increase protective factors within families and create self-efficacy in mothers so that they can be successful parents upon re-entry, we seek to end the intergenerational cycle of incarceration. To that end, we support efforts to focus our system on prevention and rehabilitation for justice involved youth, including the following proposals:

- SB 969 (End Automatic Waiver into Adult Court) places youth accused of any crimes in the juvenile justice system instead of the adult justice system. To move a youth to the adult justice system, prosecutors would need to request a special hearing with a judge who would decide where youth are placed.
- SB 966 (Hearing Before Transfer to DOC) would require an additional review before a youth with a long sentence would be transferred to an adult prison. Currently, Oregon youth who are given long sentences can stay in a youth prison until age twenty-five and are then transferred to an adult prison. This proposal would allow a judge to determine if the twenty-five-year old has been sufficiently rehabilitated to transfer them to community-based supervision, rather than adult prison.
- SB 1008 (Second Look Hearings) establishes a process where all youth who are convicted in adult court have access to a "Second Look" hearing half way through their sentence. At that hearing, a judge determines whether the youth has taken responsibility for their crime and been rehabilitated, which would allow the remainder of their sentence to be served under community-based supervision, rather than being incarcerated.
- SB 968 (End Juvenile Life Without Parole) would eliminate life without parole sentences for youth in Oregon by establishing a process to ensure that anyone convicted of a crime when they are under eighteen years old receives a chance for parole after fifteen years of incarceration.

We hope that you will join us in supporting these important bills.

Thank you,



Susan Stoltenberg  
CEO, YWCA of Greater Portland

eliminating  
empowering  
**ywca**

of greater portland

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