



March 27, 2019

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
Support for Juvenile Legislation**

Clackamas County supports SB 966, SB 968, SB 969, and SB 1008: The Board of County Commissioners supports legislation that improves the health, safety, and wellbeing of all county residents and communities, which includes best practices for justice-involved individuals. For this reason, Clackamas County supports the policy direction encompassed in legislation that addresses reform for adolescents who become involved in the justice system.

Over the last decade, research clearly demonstrates that transferring adolescents to the adult system does not match with best practices for intervening with juveniles, nor does it yield better outcomes. Studies conducted over the last two decades have shown that youth who are waived to adult court reoffend at higher levels, and are 34% more likely to be re-arrested for violent or other crimes than those who are allowed to stay in the juvenile justice system. Waived youth are also at a greater risk for abuse and suicide than their counterparts in the juvenile justice system.

Clackamas County agrees with the position of the National Association of Counties (NACo) regarding the transfer and involvement of youth in the adult criminal justice system, found here: https://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/2018-2019_American_County_Platform.pdf. We also oppose automatically trying and sentencing youth in adult criminal court. The decision to transfer a juvenile to adult court for being a chronic offender and/or committing violent crimes should instead be made by a juvenile court judge who presides over a waiver hearing.

Clackamas County supports the package of bills listed above, which are designed to reform state laws that transfer youth to the adult system and control future opportunities for release of individuals who were convicted while they were still juveniles.

We urge a “YES” vote for SB 966, SB 968, SB 969, and SB 1008.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.