

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

We're writing to urge a "NO" vote on SB 1008. This bill is yet another end-run around the will of the people. Oregon voters have on two occasions demonstrated overwhelming support for tough sentencing guidelines, with long mandatory sentences for violent crime. Remember Measure 11? That represents the will of the people – people who vote for you, and pay taxes to this state!

We realize that this bill primarily addresses youthful offenders. However, it really seems to minimize the impact of the violent crimes they commit. Violent crimes committed by youth are not simply "mistakes!" How is a rape or murder any different if it is committed by someone under 18 years old? The proponents of this bill are in favor of rehabilitation over incarceration; however, we're skeptical that someone who is already so violent can be easily rehabilitated. Rehabilitation is a noble goal; however, violent criminals need to be held accountable for their crimes! What justice will there be for the victims of these criminals?

It is my understanding that the most notorious killer in Oregon history - Kip Kinkel - could be eligible for immediate release under this legislation, which is completely unbelievable if true. He's a mass murderer who should have been executed, but failing that, he should spend the rest of his life in jail! Even if Mr. Kinkel won't be made eligible for release, someone under 18 who committed the same type of crime would likely only spend 15 years in jail! How is that even possible!

It's ironic that the Legislature seems bent on reducing sentences for violent criminals, returning them to the streets years before they should be, while at the same time putting maximum effort into disarming law-abiding citizens. It doesn't make any sense!

The safety of the citizens of Oregon needs to come first!

It's interesting that the testimony representatives of the state agencies involved in the juvenile justice system reference the term "stakeholders." Keep in mind that the citizens of Oregon are stakeholders as well, as we will be bearing the brunt of the fallout from this bill. The Legislature needs to start listening to the voters of Oregon. They do not support SB 1008. Please vote "NO" on this dangerous piece of legislation.

Thank You,

Keith and Tami LaHaie  
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