



**Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association**  
*Representing Oregon's County Juvenile Departments*  
www.ojdda.org

Joe Ferguson, President  
Jim Goodwin, President Elect  
Debra Patterson, Treasurer

OJDDA  
305 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> St  
Prineville, OR, 97754

**RE:** Testimony in support of SB 924

Honorable Chair Jennifer Williamson and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

For the record, I am Deena Corso and I have the honor of serving as the Juvenile Services Division Director for the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice and the Legislative Committee Chair for the Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association (OJDDA). I am testifying before you today on behalf of OJDDA to encourage your support of Senate Bill 924.

In Oregon, county juvenile departments like mine operate juvenile detention facilities. Statutes guide decisions regarding the placement of youth into detention. While the juvenile department directors throughout Oregon do not support the placement of status offenders or dependent children in detention, the current language of our Juvenile Code is vague and appears to allow Oregon children and wards who have not committed delinquent acts to be placed in detention.

The negative impact of unnecessary confinement in detention, even for delinquent youth, is well documented in the research, particularly for youth experiencing mental health issues or who have experienced trauma. As a general rule, placement in detention should only be used for youth offenders who cannot be safely maintained in the community.

We support the revision that Senate Bill 924 provides in stipulating that runaways from this state should either be returned to their home as soon as possible if it is safe to return them or they should be assessed for an appropriate placement that does not include detention.

In accordance with the federal rules of the Interstate Compact for Juveniles, runaways from other states who are a danger to themselves or others must be detained in a secure facility to assure their safe return to their home state, which means they could be placed in detention. However, the rules do provide for discretion to use less restrictive alternatives like shelter care for out-of-state runaways who are not a danger to themselves or others. We would encourage this option be utilized whenever possible.

Senate Bill 924 provides some needed updates to our existing Juvenile Code. The changes to the code that explicitly indicate that wards, children, and in-state runaways who need placement and have not committed delinquent acts may not be placed in detention is an important step in ensuring youth are not unnecessarily placed in detention.

OJDDA urges your support for Senate Bill 924. Thank you.

Submitted by:

Deena Corso, Juvenile Services Division Director

Multnomah County Department of Community Justice

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