

Youth, Rights & Justice

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Oregon House
Committee on Judiciary
Testimony in Support of SB 924
May 7, 2019

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair Gorsek, and Members of the Committee, Youth, Rights & Justice (YRJ) would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 924.

Founded in 1975, Youth, Rights & Justice is a non-profit law firm located in Portland, Oregon, that provides client-centered legal representation for children, youth, and parents in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Youth, Rights & Justice also represents children, youth, and parents in delinquency and dependency cases heard by the Oregon Court of Appeals and Oregon Supreme Court, in addition to staffing an educational advocacy program. It is our mission to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families in the courts, legislature, schools and community.

YRJ has long been involved in supporting legislation to improve the juvenile code. We have been involved in many substantive policy changes and also in efforts with partners to ensure that the code is clear and unambiguous. As practitioners, we are constantly reviewing and using the code. We appreciate language that leaves no doubt in the minds of the parties, the attorneys, and the judicial officers about its meaning and scope. SB 924 clarifies some sections of the code dealing with detention and shelter care and brings what appears to be out-of-date language into compliance with other existing law.

YRJ supports SB 924. It is our understanding that amendments may also be made to clarify the different treatment legally required for in-state, versus out-of-state, runaways. YRJ also supports this clarification. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to improve the juvenile code.