



FROM THE DESK OF:
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Pam Marsh

Editorial: Senate gets it right

On Tuesday, the Oregon Senate voted to change Ballot Measure 11 to be more lenient toward juvenile offenders 25 years after voters passed it, along with other changes to juvenile sentencing laws. It was the right thing to do.

Measure 11, a get-tough-on-crime initiative passed in 1994, set mandatory minimum sentences for crimes including murder, rape and assault and required juveniles 15 and older accused of those crimes to be tried as adults. SB 1008 removes that requirement and leaves the decision in the hands of a judge.

The measure also allows juvenile offenders scheduled to be released from custody before their 27th birthday to be released at 25 rather than being transferred to the adult Department of Corrections, creates new provisions for early release and makes sure offenders who commit crimes before they turn 18 but are not sentenced until age 19 won't be sent to adult prison.

A 2018 study by the Oregon Council on Civil Rights concluded that Measure 11 "has had no clear benefit to public safety as measured by deterrence or recidivism."

Research shows juveniles' brains aren't fully developed until at least 20, and they have a greater capacity for change and growth.

Opponents of SB 1008 argue that the voters should decide. But another 1994 initiative, Ballot Measure 10, said lawmakers could reduce voter-approved sentences with a two-thirds vote.

The Senate did that Tuesday. **The House should follow suit.**

—The Ashland Daily Tidings Editorial Board

Excerpts with emphasis added. Read the full editorial online here: <https://ashlandtidings.com/opinion/editorial/senate-gets-it-right>.

(Handwritten notes: circled initials, 5/7/19, and a signature)