



From the Desk of  
Representative  
Marty Wilde

# LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jay Bozievich  
Pat Farr  
Joe Berney  
Pete Sorenson  
Heather Buch

DATE: May 7, 2019  
TO: Lane County Delegation to the Oregon Legislature  
RE: Senate Bill 1008 A, Relating to Juvenile Offender Sentencing.

The Lane County Board of Commissioners writes today to express our support of SB 1008 A.

We normally endeavor to be timely with establishing positions on legislative measures that have implications for County Departments. However, in examining SB 1008 we were acutely aware of the wide disparity between the Lane County District Attorney’s established position on the bill and the recommendation from our Juvenile Justice Division.

We ask that you recognize Lane County has been ground zero on several crimes committed by juveniles which were clearly exceedingly violent and tragic criminal acts. Those young people were prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced as adults under existing Oregon law in the Lane County Circuit Court. The victims of these crimes and others rely on the voice and action of the District Attorney in matters that have brought them or their kin to the depths of despair. The ability to provide justice for victims is uniquely human and in our system of Justice it is the prosecutor alone that speaks for victims. The Lane County Office of the District Attorney has consistently provided focused services for victims and regularly advocates for these services to be enhanced. We trust you have heard and respect her concerns for the passage of this measure that these sentences not be impacted and that adequate resources will be appropriated for the additional victims services requirements within the measure.

Our Board also came at this issue with experience from participation in a plethora of issues related to adult recidivism gained since the passage of HB 3194 in 2013. We have been intimately involved in making decisions about how to spend Justice Reinvestment money, and implemented so-termed “SB 416 (high risk offender)” projects with the assistance of the Criminal Justice Commission. We know that reform can occur through appropriate re-allocations of dollars along with new strategies which support treatment over incarceration. Lane County is proud of our work and key to our success in this realm is our degree of collaboration and compromise that exists with each of our public safety involved partners. Many of them support SB 1008A.

In terms of juvenile justice, Lane County voters supported the construction of a new Juvenile Justice Center some 20 years ago that uniquely placed the Juvenile Court at that location. Through that center, our work has evolved into a myriad of programs that serve to prevent youth not only from recidivating, but also to prevent their involvement with the criminal justice system in the first place. In fact, Lane County’s Strategic Plan identifies as high priorities several strategies to evolve treatment programs for youth, particularly those that identify behavioral health issues and divert entry (into the criminal justice system). We believe that youth who have committed crimes can be rehabilitated and deserve some degree of hope that they may participate in the opportunities our society offers, including the opportunity to provide a more meaningful way to atone for their crimes than a life of incarceration.



5/14/19

It is with both of these legitimate perspectives in mind that we have determined that SB 1008 A should advance to the Governor's desk. We are comfortable with the provisions of this bill which:

- Transfer prosecutorial authority to the juvenile court via a waiver procedure
- Gives the District Attorney authority to involve behavioral health professionals in waiver hearings
- Provide additional victim participation in waiver hearings
- Allow for a mid-sentence hearing and conditional release, the so-termed "second look"
- Limit the term of the sentence to 15 years , with a process in place that can extend the sentence if necessary

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Sorenson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Pete Sorenson, Chair