



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 22, 2021

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
Senator Chris Gorsek, Co-Chair
Representative Janeen Sollman, Co-Chair

Re: HB 5039 – Oregon Youth Authority Budget – **Support**

The League of Women Voters has a position on Juvenile Justice that supports services for juvenile offenders in the least restrictive environment and/or treatment oriented secure custody.

The Oregon Youth Authority needs to maintain facilities and hire staff for supervision in these facilities as a major commitment of funds. OYA hires parole staff in communities for supervision of youth who have returned to the community. On the front end, prevention programs attempt to divert youth offenders from entering the OYA system. These payments to County Juvenile Departments attempt to control the feeder system into OYA facilities. The Diversion Programs can be cost effective and restrict growth in the correctional facilities. Cuts in payments to counties may not be cost effective in the long term.

The plan to decrease the number of youth in living units should help in supervision on the units and decrease youth on youth violent activity. Relationships between staff and youth are important for trust and safety in the units. School, counseling, and work training programs are also staff intensive but are necessary for the reformation of youth in custody.

The League believes that OYA services can prevent the adjudicated youth from further law violations and incarceration in the adult system. In that spirit, we encourage passage of a budget that will allow the agency to continue county diversion programs, close custody programs, and community supervision for the number of youth who have been committed to their care.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky L. Gladstone".

Becky Gladstone
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Nibler".

Karen Nibler
LWVOR Social Policy