



Chairs Gorsek and Sollman, members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety,

My name is Dan Torres and I am a political coordinator with Oregon AFSCME Council 75. Oregon AFSCME represents 30,000 workers across the state including folks at the Oregon Youth Authority. We are writing today to stand in support of SB 5039 the budget for the Oregon Youth Authority.

The Oregon Youth Authority has been a vital component of Oregon's judicial landscape and we applaud their continued success with our states youth. We stand in strong support of providing OYA the resource they need to continue their great work. We are very encouraged that the Governor recommended budget keeps much of the program and their pieces whole.

The work that our members do with youth that would normally have been released to the adult system is crucial for their long-term success. Our members provide more than just supervision and, in many cases, act as case managers, providing a variety of resources and access to programs and information for successful reentry. As a part of the overall system, the work our member do is important, and we need to continue to invest in that approach.

As OYA continues to look at ways to better support and provide support that focuses on positive human development we need to ensure that the resources provided to OYA give flexibility. From youth of color to older youth, there is much about the support our members provide that will require them to address gaps and failures in the system and we need to ensure there is funding for approaches that may be new and inventive and flexible.

OYA has made strides as an organization to re-think, re-imagine and recenter their work around how best to support the youth and we are encouraged by the Governors suggested proposal of keeping programmatic areas whole while hopefully supporting additional work towards DEI initiatives. There are other proposals out there this session that could have potential impacts on the OYA budget around child support payments for youth and I hope committee members weigh those budget implications to ensure the Authority can operate at or above its current level.

For these reasons and many others, Oregon AFSCME asks the committee to support OYA's budget in ways do not reduce services, staff, and capacity and gives them flexibility to continue their great work.

Dan Torres
Political Coordinator
Oregon AFSCME