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January 28, 2023

To: House Committee on Judiciary

From: Heather Busby, Executive Director

Re: **Support for HB 2320**

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Anderson and Wallen, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

Founded in 1975, Youth, Rights & Justice is Oregon's only non-profit juvenile public defense firm. Each year, we provide holistic, client-centered representation to around 1000 children, youth, and parents in Oregon's juvenile court system. Additionally, we provide early defense advocacy to keep families together and educational advocacy so children can attend, graduate, and succeed in school. In 2021, we launched our expunction clinic for individuals with juvenile records.

Black, Indigenous and People of Color are overrepresented in child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Through our advocacy for Oregon's children, youth, and parents, we often see the same systemic problems and we work to change the policies that contribute to these problems.

YRJ Supports HB 2320.

Youth, Rights & Justice supports the broad approach in HB 2320 for improving youth outcomes within the juvenile justice system. HB 2320 identifies a number of considerations that will address systemic problems in the system. As Oregon Youth Authority Director Joe O'Leary recently told this Committee, OYA and every system player plays a role in reducing racial and ethnic disparities. As the Honorable Judge Morgan Wren Long said, youth must be treated consistent with their adolescent brain development and the end goal is for youth to continue on the positive trajectory started with juvenile justice involvement.

HB 2320 recognizes the importance of aligning Oregon's juvenile justice system with both research and constitutional mandates. HB 2320 can also offer promising opportunities for reforms based on data and best practices.

Thank you for your work to improve the juvenile justice system in Oregon so that we can improve outcomes for youth. We look forward to continued dialogue and would welcome an opportunity to participate on the Juvenile Justice Advisory Commission created by HB 2320.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HB', written in a cursive style.

Heather Busby (she/her)
Executive Director