



Governor Tina Kotek

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Brian Detman - *Director*



April 3, 2023

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on the Judiciary,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2372, which would update the statutes of the Youth Development Council and Youth Development Division. I want to provide expanded responses to the questions asked during the hearing.

Representative Conrad asked whether these changes addressed a discrete problem.

As noted in my response this morning, the overall purpose of these statutory changes is to clarify, align and improve the existing language. The ambiguity in the original statutes has at times led to some uncertainty about Council and Division authority in aspects of their shared work, which would be corrected by this bill.

- The roles and responsibilities of the Council and Division regarding grantmaking processes are not clear. The Council's responsibility to "determine availability of funding" is modified to "approve funding processes" to clarify that the Council has oversight of grantmaking (via rulemaking and approval of grant application processes) while the Division is responsible for carrying out the distribution processes and administration of grants awarded.
- When the legislature directly appropriates funding to the division to administer grants, it is not currently clear whether the division has authority to do so, unless it is explicitly noted in the legislation that appropriates the funds. Changes here would make it clear that the Division shall distribute and administer grants when directed by the Council or the Legislature.
- The Youth Development Division's scope of work, responsibilities and authority are not described in the current statute, as it was written only to establish the Division, but has not been modified to account for the work that the Division has been tasked with by the Council and subsequent legislation. As responsibilities in practice have increased and become established, this is a timely opportunity to reflect these roles in statutory updates.

The changes related to the Council and Division’s priorities and approaches to youth development work are reflective of the strategic direction (memorialized in the Youth Development Oregon Strategic Plan) and priorities of the Council as well as broader asset- and community-based perspectives, which were incorporated after reviewing the entirety of the statutes and identifying other opportunities for improvement alongside the updates to Council and Division roles and responsibilities.

Representative Morgan asked about the change from the Council “focus[ing] on crime prevention” to “promot[ing] protective factors, prevents justice system involvement,” and asked for clarification on what is meant by “protective factors.”

This change is meant to reflect the fact that YDC and YDD programs work to prevent youth contact with the justice system, which may or may not also include arrest for and conviction of a crime. Juvenile Crime Prevention plans, for example, seek to reduce the number of youth who are referred to the Juvenile Justice System, and to reduce recidivism. Ideally, these programs should not only prevent crime, but prevent youth from coming in contact with the justice system at all. Data indicates that the likelihood of recurring justice system involvement (arrest, referral, detention, probation, incarceration) increases when our most vulnerable and marginalized youth — youth of color, youth from families living in poverty, etc. — come into contact with and penetrate the justice system. Crime prevention remains a priority. Section 3 details how the Division is tasked with carrying out its work in a manner that “supports education and career success, disrupts youth crime and violence and affirms youth strengths and safety” within a broader goal of preventing youth involvement in the justice system on the whole.

“Protective Factors” are supports, resources and interventions that support youth success and prevent justice system involvement and criminal behaviors. These include a broad variety of activities, programs, interventions, resources and asset-based approaches, including:

- Family engagement and support
- Positive adult role models, mentoring, and supervision
- Positive attitudes, values or beliefs
- Good mental, physical, and emotional health
- Problem solving and restorative conflict resolution practices
- Supportive schools
- Connection to community and culture
- Engagement in school and/or employment
- Incentives and rewards to increase positive behaviors

The community-based programs funded by Youth Development Council and Division grants support protective factors and assets as a means of increasing youth success, reducing high-risk behaviors, and preventing contact with the justice system.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our work, and for your consideration of this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Detman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Detman, Youth Development Director