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To: House Committee on Judiciary
From: Heather Busby, Executive Director

Re: **HB 4097**

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee,

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 juvenile expunction clinic.

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. One glaring systemic problem is that Black, Indigenous, Latinx people, and other people of color are overrepresented in child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

YRJ supports HB 4097.

We need to clear a path to expungement, which will help Oregonians who are negatively affected by their past. We know that a person's record can prevent them from obtaining employment, housing, and more. Through YRJ's juvenile expunction work, we have seen firsthand the difference that having their records cleared has had for 6,483 Oregonians. It is inhumane to continue punishing individuals for their past when all other requirements have been met.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "H. Busby", written in a cursive style.

Heather Busby, Executive Director