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To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
From: Heather Busby, Executive Director

Re: **HB 4086**

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

Founded in 1975, Youth, Rights & Justice is Oregon's only non-profit juvenile public defense provider. 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 the -1 amendment to HB 4086 directing ODHS to commission studies and form advisory committees on the scope of child abuse and on problematic sexual behaviors to allow for thorough discussion before any substantive law changes.

We would like to emphasize the importance of having the perspective of attorneys who represent children and families in the dependency court system as members of both advisory committees.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.