



Disability  
Rights  
Oregon

TO: House Judiciary Committee  
FROM: Disability Rights Oregon  
DATE: February 7, 2025  
RE: Opposition for HB 2804

Chair Kropf and Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan,

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) opposes the elimination of the Juvenile Psychiatric Review Board and placing youth under the adult Psychiatric Security Review Board. This move would not be in the best interest of the youth in the juvenile justice system, and it would eliminate the protections that are arguably in the current system due to the inherent differences between youth and adults.

Systems with important protections should not be changed for expediency reasons. Granted, few youths are placed under the supervision of the JPRB and eliminating the Juvenile board and placing youth under the Adult Psychiatric Security Review Board would decrease the need for several of the PSRB members.

However, the positions that would be eliminated from the PSRB would be those that are directly focused on juveniles. The bill would place children in the adult PSRB system AND remove all the subject matter experts for children in the mental health and criminal justice system. The proposed bill would remove the following members of the PSRB:

1. A psychiatrist certified, or eligible to be certified, by the Oregon Medical Board in child psychiatry who is experienced in the juvenile justice system and not employed on a full-time basis by the authority or a community mental health program;
2. A licensed psychologist who is experienced in child psychology and the juvenile justice system and not employed on a full-time basis by the authority or a community mental health program;
3. A member with substantial experience in the processes of juvenile parole and probation;]
4. A lawyer with substantial experience in juvenile law practice; and]
5. Two members of the general public.]

We have a separate adult and juvenile justice system for good reasons. Research is abundantly clear that adolescent adult brains are much different. Adolescent brains are developing and the impulsive, emotional, and risk-taking behaviors that occur during youth oftentimes mature. We fear that the PSRB will continue to impose strict guidelines on youth well beyond necessity. This is often what happens in adult PSRB cases, and doing so would be expensive and prevent the youth from progressing in their adult lives.

DRO subscribes to the recommendations of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP): (1) treat children as children; (2) serve children at home; and (3) open opportunities for system-involved youth. As OJJDP summarizes: “Youth contact with the justice system is neither fair nor beneficial if that system fails to treat them as children, respecting their needs and ensuring they receive developmentally appropriate services.”

[https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/03-2023/treating\\_children\\_as\\_children.html](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/03-2023/treating_children_as_children.html)

DRO respectfully opposes HB 2804 because children in the justice system should be treated as children, with professionals experienced in the youth system, and to do otherwise would be regressive, unfair, and more expensive than the current system.

### About Disability Rights Oregon

Since 1977 Disability Rights Oregon has been the State's Protection and Advocacy System.<sup>1</sup> We are authorized by Congress to protect, advocate, and enforce the rights of people with disabilities under the U.S. Constitution and Federal and State laws, investigate abuse and neglect of people with disabilities, and “pursue administrative, legal, and other appropriate remedies”.<sup>2</sup> We are also mandated to “educate policymakers” on matters related to people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

If you have any questions regarding DRO’s position on this legislation, please contact Ben Gerewitz via email: [bgerewitz@droregon.org](mailto:bgerewitz@droregon.org).

Sincerely,

Dave Boyer  
Managing Attorney  
Mental Health Rights Project

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<sup>1</sup> See ORS 192.517.

<sup>2</sup> See 42 U.S.C. § 15041 et seq; 42 U.S.C. § 10801 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> See 42 U.S. Code § 15043(a)(2)(L).