



YOUTH SERVICES

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Pioneering pathways to prosperity.

Support for HB 2374 -2 Amendment

Good afternoon Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Scharf, and members of the committee,

My name is Molly Rogers, and I am the Director of Youth Services in Wasco County located along the beautiful Columbia River and in The Dalles, and started my career in Wallowa County. This is my 30th year as a Director. I am here today to support the -2 Amendment to House Bill 2374. As a long term juvenile department director in rural counties, I have seen the benefit of working directly with families to remove barriers for youth to remain and re-engage with their educational experience.

In a position paper the Oregon Juvenile Department Directors Association understands the value of education in supporting young people's development, skills, and ultimately their vocation. The CARE teams are examples of the investments of home visiting, system collaborations, and has both supports for young people and their families in reducing barriers. Young people are best served through prevention and interventions within community. This bill aligns with those values and best practices.

HB 2374 -2 allows communities to come together and develop strategies to be individualized and family driven to increase school attendance and reduce the risk factors associated with a lack of attachment to education. In Wasco County we have a similar program to CARE called, What's Strong with You! This program operating in The Dalles Middle School has dramatically reduced the referrals of students to the Department of Youth Services for low level school behavior violations. It has also increased both the sense of school attachment and identified caring adults students can turn to for assistance and support. HB 2374 may allow us to expand and bring even additional supports to the program to offer the outreach to a broader target population reaching down into the elementary schools and offering connection to students in high school.

The -2 amendment appropriately provides Youth Development Division as the responsible state agency for implementing the CARE team concept across Oregon communities. YDO has a pathway to work with local community based organizations, counties, and school districts to enter into contracts/agreements for educational success supports. YDO has also created grant opportunities the prioritize education success and re-engagement for students ages 6 through young adulthood.

House Bill 2374 provides the framework for the CARE team model to be replicated across the state. The fact that the framework was developed and implemented across multiple rural counties through an Educational Service District allowing other rural areas to use the current program as a model.

I appreciate your time today during the hearing and I encourage the support of House Bill 2374 with the -2 amendments.

Sincerely,