



OREGON
Alliance
of Children's Programs

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
6 May 2013

HB 3509

Dear Chair Barker, Vice Chairs Garrett and Krieger, and Committee Members:

I am Janet Arenz, Executive Director of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs. We are a statewide non-profit, supporting good budgets and good policies for children and families, so that we can make children Oregon's greatest asset.

We do this by representing \$205 million in small businesses, and support services and programs for over 100,000 children. Our members have an annual payroll of \$152 million for 5,500 employees and raise \$35 million in philanthropic resources each year.

Member programs span child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, addiction, runaway and homeless, developmental disabilities and prevention.

We appreciate the concerns communities have about predatory adult sex offenders who are often also violent offenders. These are described in the bill through ORS 137.765 and ORS 181.585.

However, these adults are very different from youth who have been swept into this bill through ORS 675.365.

Our members provide treatment for sexual assault victims and for youth sex offenders.

Through evidence-based programs, we achieve very high success rates for sex offenders in our programs, and have very low recidivism rates for these offenders.

Because of their responsiveness to treatment, age, and treatment outcomes, we believe juvenile offenders should be exempted from the bill.

- These youth are often incarcerated, and then in treatment, for 5-8 years.
- After completing treatment, they have the lowest recidivism rate of most any criminal offense. As time goes on, their recidivism rate continues to drop.

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- Juvenile offenders are most often victims themselves. With intensive, evidence-based mental health treatment they have a remarkable ability to transform themselves.
 - In one of my member programs for younger boys in OYA custody, they have a **0% recidivism rate** for sexual offense over at least the last 5 years. Many of these boys are able to reunite with their own families.
 - One study done of a current sex offender program for older youth showed that only 2 of 94 over 7 years had reoffended. Programs for older youth turn Tax-Users into Tax-Payers as the boys graduate, obtain employment and appropriate living circumstances.
- In Oregon, youth who go through the Oregon Youth Authority treatment programs (which include organizations and programs in the community) are very unlikely to reoffend. The recidivism rate is roughly 5% through a five year follow-up period.

We are also concerned that siting these programs will sweep along with them the many other programs also provided in the same buildings.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to exempt youth and youth treatment programs from the bill.

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SITING OPTIONS

Community concerns about who is in their neighborhood, lack of information or communication, how often social services are sited in their neighborhood, and saturation issues can create difficult circumstances for neighbors who raise legitimate issues.

I have been on the Board of my neighborhood association for 10 years, and periodically see issues like those in Representative Vega-Pederson's district, raised by constituents.

I believe Representative Vega-Pederson is very responsive to her constituents and is looking for resources and real solutions.

And there are resources out there for citizens, though they can be hard to discover. For example, the City of Portland has some very good recommendations for citizens on how to address siting issues in their communities.

I had an opportunity to spend two years working on a Residential Siting Task Force for the City of Portland. While the siting issues in this bill focus on outpatient services, the strategies and recommendations for providers and for citizens, are applicable to today's circumstances.

SITING SOCIAL SERVICES

The City of Portland has a website with several documents on it for public use:
<http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?c=32417>

On this page are the following documents:

Community Involvement Strategies, Resources, and Tools for Social Service Providers (28 pages)

Siting Guidebook for Neighbors

Recommended Public Involvement Guidelines

2002 Site Selection Guidelines for Post Incarceration Facilities

These guidelines were created as part of a particular incident in Portland where a neighborhood had been inundated with more and more social service programs. And at one point, they had had enough of feeling like they didn't know any longer who was in their community; or what public safety issues they represented. No one talked to them about their programs and clients, and they didn't know who to call with questions or problems.

These recommendations emphasize communication from the providers even before opening their programs in a new location; strategies for neighbors to get information; and recommendations for both parties.

GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENTS

In addition to these resources, many municipalities also have Good Neighbor Agreements. These are good for all kinds of businesses where you may be concerned about parking, clients and patrons, noise or conduct. This is a separate strategy, and can be negotiated between the neighbors, the business owner and the city. They often include a 24-hour contact name and phone number to address potential issues.

INTERIM CONVERSATION NEEDED

I agree with Representative Vega-Pederson, that the concerns of neighbors today, as well as the potential issues for the future, can't be resolved in this hearing. There are tools and information that need to be looked at, and opportunities for neighbors that we might be missing without that work.