



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

February 25, 2015

Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Chair
Senator Chip Shields, Co-Chair
WaysandMeans.PublicSafetySub@state.or.us

Re: SB 5542 - Oregon Youth Authority - Support

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The LWVOR has a position on Juvenile Justice that supports services for juvenile offenders in the least restrictive environment and/or treatment-oriented secure custody.

The League approves of the facilities consolidation plan to close the Hillcrest facility in south Salem and move residents to the larger facility at MacLaren in Woodburn. Some of the buildings in these facilities are very old and a major investment will be required to replace and/or add buildings at MacLaren. The number of community residential placements for youth offenders has grown and numbers committed to institutions has decreased. But the remaining institutions still need to be renovated and updated.

The League believes that youth offenders should be placed in the least restrictive program with education and treatment services available. We support the Youth Reformation System within Oregon Youth Authority and the use of data in the formation of policy and placement decisions. We commend the staff for their progressive work and trust that staff at the institutions and in county juvenile departments are being trained in the new systems.

The League remains concerned about the youth offenders committed in the adult system. The use of research on juvenile brain development and effective treatment programs might eventually lead to shorter length of commitments and reduced costs in the OYA facilities. We support the funding for county Juvenile Departments and OYA Parole supervision for youth offenders living at home or in residential placements in our communities. Effective supervision and sanctions can reduce the progression to further crimes and commitments to state institutions. Counties rely on state funding for basic services and detention facilities to manage youth in the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Wisdom".

Robin Wisdom
President LWVOR

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Nibler".

Karen Nibler
Social Policy Coordinator