



TO: Oregon Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Pub Sub

FR: Amy Herzfeld-Copple and Nancy Haque, Co-Directors, Basic Rights Oregon

DA: February 22, 2017

RE: Support for HB 5042 The Oregon Youth Authority Budget

Co-Chairs Winters and Stark, Members of the Committee, Basic Rights Oregon supports the Oregon Youth Authority Budget and encourages the Committee to support Policy Option Packages to help ensure services to improve public safety and address key needs for Oregon's most at risk youth.

Basic Rights Oregon is a twenty-one year old non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Oregonians. Unfortunately, low-income, youth of color and LGBTQ youth are often over represented in the juvenile system and for that reason Basic Rights has a strong interest in the Oregon Youth Authority and its programs.

The Governor's budget proposes to fund the Young Women's Transition Program in Albany, gives a long overdue rate increase to OYA partners who provide community residential services, would make permanent direct care staff working to prevent and reduce the use of isolation in facilities, and makes permanent existing team members in the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, critical Information Services and Human Resources staff, and investigators in the Professional Standards Office. Finally, the Governor's budget also proposes the next phase of bond funding for the OYA 10-Year Facilities Strategic Plan.

Basic Rights Oregon has worked closely with OYA regarding their policies and procedures for managing gay and transgender youth in OYA facilities. The commitment of OYA leadership to ensure safety and provide appropriate physical and mental health supports for this population has been very high. Some of the harder challenges to resolve are due to aging infrastructure at key facilities and any resources or bonding authority that could be made available to address those would be keenly appreciated.

Basic Rights Oregon is aware of the very serious budget challenges facing Oregon lawmakers in balancing the 2017-2019 Oregon State Budget. We encourage the Committee to do everything possible to support OYA and to prioritize resources for this very important part of the public safety system, which so deeply impacts youth.

Thank you.