



February 28, 2019

To the Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Winters and Representative Piluso and members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety:

I write to include my voice in support of the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) and SB 5541.

As the Director of Lewis & Clark Law School's Criminal Justice Reform Clinic (the Clinic), I work directly and often with OYA's staff and youth on a variety of projects and cases. In addition to numerous volunteer initiatives that my students participate in, the Clinic represents individual youth in clemency petitions and over the last year, has been creating and running an OYA legal services pilot project for incarcerated youth throughout the State. Through all of these endeavors, I have been impressed with the youth we have engaged with, the agency's constant desire to examine its culture as a whole and in its individual facilities/programs, and the commitment of its staff and community partners.

The importance of a therapeutic and caring environment for youth cannot be understated. OYA's commitment to education and job training services and its reliance on evidence-based treatment works to increase self-esteem and create opportunities for youth around the State. Many of the youth the Clinic has worked with over the years describe OYA as helping them to develop their sense of self awareness and identity. OYA's programs have certainly contributed to their growth and their positive contributions to the community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss OYA further. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aliza B. Kaplan".

Professor Aliza B. Kaplan
Director, Criminal Justice Reform Clinic