

March 24, 2019

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
2019 Oregon Legislature
900 Court St. NE, S-413, Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Sen. Prozanski, Chair, Sen. Kim Thatcher, Vice-Chair,
& Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary –

Thank you for the slate of youth justice bills sponsored this session by the Senate Judiciary Committee. With public hearings set for March 28, I'm writing to encourage consideration of the proposed changes to Oregon law embedded within SBs 966, 967, 968, 969, and 1008.

To further equity and community safety, these bills emphasize prevention and rehabilitation. They look forward, acknowledging capacity for change—acknowledging youth potential. The bills also include security features such as sentencing discretion.

For a number of years, I volunteered as a co-mediator in numerous restorative justice cases with youth aged 9 to 17. All kinds of kids and all kinds of crimes. The idea was to focus on the harm, support offenders and victims in deliberating over the resulting obligations, and help them put right the wrong. What also was so important was the learning that went on, especially for offenders. While the bills that are the subject of the March 28 hearing aren't restorative justice mediation bills, they too aim to concentrate the system on more effective and humane outcomes. They too envision that in taking responsibility for their actions, young people can make things right and contribute more fully as members of our communities.

Equal justice for all requires a rational, effective, and fair justice system. Thank you for your work, and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Keli Osborn
Eugene, Oregon