

Dear Senator Prozanski and Committee Members:

I strongly support SB 966 that would require an additional review before a youth is transferred to adult prison when they turn 25. As a community member with a long standing interest in juvenile justice, I am aware that the Oregon Youth Authority provides the youth it serves with educational and other programs that help get them on the right track. Sending these youth from OYA into an adult prison where they will be surrounded by hardened criminals will further traumatize them and will not contribute to their long term success.

In this era of mass incarceration, providing this additional review will keep some young people out of prison. Of course, it will be important to provide support and supervision for those deemed eligible to return to their communities upon release from OYA.

Oregon's youth sentencing laws were created during the tough-on-crime era. We need to change our laws to reflect what we've learned since then. It is inexcusable that incarceration rates in this country are so high — SB 966 will be one small step to reverse the harm we have done as a society.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,

Debbie Aiona
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