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March 26, 2019

To: Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Senate Bill 966 - Support
Senate Bill 968 - Support
Senate Bill 969 - Support
Senate Bill 1008 - Support

Dear Senator Prozanski, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,
Our family adopted a 6 year old from Oregon foster care. She was one of those kids with "at least one diagnosed mental health disorder," and "at least one foster care episode." She was angry, explosive and oppositional. There were months when we put away the kitchen knives and hid the matches. Her parents engaged in "therapeutic gardening," particularly watering!

At about age 18, with years of therapy and family support, the hot anger burned out. By age 20, she matured into an adult: a good person who can reason, who can review consequences and learn to make good choices. Someone who is now a thoughtful 25 year-old and a good friend.

Many kids don't get that kind of support and take that anger out into the world.

Brain maturation is a real phenomenon. All of the above Senate Bills acknowledge this science, and the possibility of growth and maturation when teens are supported during incarceration with structure, and opportunities to learn and take on responsibility. I have several friends who have volunteered at Oregon Youth Authority. Good work is performed there to help in this learning and maturation. There is a commitment to prepare incarcerated youth to enter back into community - with supervision.

Each of these bills addresses an option to increase review at steps along the way to long-term adult incarceration. They are smart and focused.

I urge your Support for these Senate Bills.

Thank you,
Julie Chapman
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