

To: Interested Parties

From: GBAO

Date: March 21, 2019

Oregon Poll Results on Youth Justice Reform

A new poll finds that Oregonians across the political spectrum want the youth justice system to focus on prevention and rehabilitation more than punishment and incarceration. Oregonians favor several reforms to the state's youth justice system, including requiring second look hearings, placing youth in the juvenile justice system rather than the adult justice system, and ending life without the chance of parole for youth.

The following are key findings from a recent survey of 600 registered voters in Oregon conducted by GBAO on behalf of ACLU of Oregon.

- **Oregonians across the political spectrum want the youth justice system to focus on prevention and rehabilitation more than punishment and incarceration.** Eighty-eight percent of Oregonians want more of a focus on prevention and rehabilitation of youth in the justice system, including 80 percent of Republicans, 87 percent of Independents, and 96 percent of Democrats.
- **Oregonians overwhelmingly favor a proposal to place all youth accused of any crimes in the juvenile justice system rather than the adult justice system.** Eighty-one percent favor this proposal, which would require prosecutors to request a special hearing with a judge who would decide where youth are placed. Seven-seventy percent of Republicans, 81 percent of Independents and 84 percent of Democrats favor it, as do 84 percent of voters <50 years old and 78 percent of voters age 50+.
- **Given the current system where some youth are placed in the adult justice system, a large majority backs a proposal requiring all youth convicted in adult court to receive a Second Look hearing half way through their sentence where a judge determines whether the youth should serve out their sentence under community-based supervision rather than incarceration.** 8-in-10 Oregonians support this proposal, while only 15 percent oppose it.
- **Oregon voters also support a proposal requiring additional review before a 25-year old, who was adjudicated as a youth, can be transferred to an adult prison, allowing a judge to determine whether the person should be transferred to an adult prison or to community-based supervision.** This proposal garners the support of 77 percent of



Oregonians, while only 19 percent oppose it. More than two-thirds of Republicans, three-quarters of Independents and 86 percent of Democrats back this proposal.

- **A clear majority of Oregonians supports a proposal to eliminate life sentences without the chance of parole for youth.** Sixty-one percent favor this proposal, compared to just 30 percent who oppose it.

<i>Proposals</i>		Total favor	Total Oppose
Juvenile Justice	Place youth accused of any crimes, including serious/violent ones, in the juvenile justice system, instead of the adult justice system. To move a youth to the adult justice system, prosecutors would need to request a special hearing with a judge who would decide where youth are placed.	81	13
Second Look Hearing	Establish a process where all youth who are convicted in adult court, (including violent crimes), have access to a "Second Look" hearing half way through their sentence. At that hearing, a judge determines whether the youth has taken responsibility for their crime and been rehabilitated, which would allow the remainder of their sentence to be served under community-based supervision, rather than being incarcerated.	80	15
Aging Out	Currently, Oregon youth who are given long sentences for serious crimes/violent can stay in a youth prison until age 25 and are then transferred to an adult prison. This proposal would require an additional review before transfer to adult prison where a judge can determine if the 25-year-old has been sufficiently rehabilitated to transfer them to community-based supervision, rather than adult prison.	77	19
Life Without Parole	Eliminate life without parole sentences for youth in Oregon by establishing a process to ensure that anyone convicted of a crime when they are under 18 years old receives a chance for parole after 15/20 years of incarceration. Life without parole sentences are currently given to youth convicted of murder or other serious crimes.	61	30

Methodology

The survey of 600 registered voters in Oregon was conducted March 7-10, 2019 on behalf of ACLU of Oregon. The sample is subject to a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The survey was conducted using live interviewers by telephone on cell phones and landlines.