

# Oregon Student Association



April 23, 2019

To: House Committee on Judiciary

From: Lizbeht Marquez

RE: SB 1008

Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Sprenger and Gorsek, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee.

My name is Lizbeht Marquez, I'm a student at Western Oregon University and I am a Policy Associate for the Oregon Student Association. The Oregon Student Association is a statewide organization that represents 130,000 students in Oregon whose mission is to work for an affordable and accessible higher education. OSA believes that Oregon should have a more humane youth justice system that focuses on accountability for youth and safety for our communities. That is why I highly encourage you to support SB 1008.

For three months I was able to volunteer for the Marion County Guaranteed Attendance Program which is a court ordered program that assists youths in developing skills to make positive changes. This program serves as an alternative to detention and I see it as an opportunity for youths to change and make positive lifestyle choices. Volunteering at GAP I was able to speak to youths about their background and the choices they made. I could see that these youths were learning to make positive changes and had goals to either continue into higher education or enter the workforce.

Research shows that young people have a great ability to grow and change and that treatment and education programs, not prisons, are the best way to help youth make better choices, stay on a path towards success and get back on track when they need help.

With the passage of this measure, more youth will have the opportunity to attend higher education, apply for scholarships and contribute to Oregon's economy. I believe that society must do better for these youths, especially the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system must be geared towards rehabilitative justice, which will address the youth's needed treatment.

Youth in the justice system should be held accountable for their actions. But we all know the value of forgiveness and second chances. When young people take responsibility for their actions, we need to help them make a positive contribution to society through rehabilitation, education and opportunity, not prison.

Thank you for your time and commitment,

Lizbeht Marquez

## OREGON STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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