



# Native American Youth and Family Center

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May 21, 2019

To: Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

RE: Senate Bill 420 – Support

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger, and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is William Miller, I am a decendent of the *Cherokee and Blackfeet* people, and I have the honor of representing the Native American Youth and Family Center located in Portland, Oregon. NAYA's wraparound programs directly serve over 2,000 individual Native American youth, adults, and Elders every year and positively impacts more than 10,000 lives throughout Portland's diverse urban Native community.

I submit testimony to urge your support in passing SB 420. Many of the individuals whom we serve have prior criminal records which prohibit their access to many opportunitieis that would have otherwise been afforded to both you and I. The State Legislature has taken bold action in years prior to protect those convicted with crimes to gainfully become employed, such as withthe passage of ban the box legislation. However, we can do more. Access and opportunity are hard to come by for individuals who have prior records from marijuana related offenses. This bill would adopt the current state standards for how marijuana is treated within our criminal justice system and it would apply it to any prior misdemeanor convictions prior to the legalization of marijuana in Oregon. If passed, this will increase the access and opportunity to employment, housing, and even federal financial aid for many throughout Oregon. Currently, any person who received a felony drug conviction, which can include offenses related to marijuana, are barred from accessing any federal financial aid; as an organization dedicated to increasing access to post-secondary education for our community, we urge you to pass this legislation which will lead to increased access to college for some Oregonians.

On behalf of the Native American Youth and Family Center, we urge the passage of Senate Bill 420, for the increased equity, judicial understanding, and future opportunities.

Thank you,

William Miller



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