



February 10, 2020

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Children First works with our 120 partner organizations to develop the Children's Agenda. We identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children - our children - so that all of our children have opportunities to reach their full potential.

**SB 1573 is a priority issue on the 2020 Children's Agenda.** We see the proposal coming out of the legislative workgroup as a critical step in improving how we approach expunging juvenile records and removing some of the current barriers to youth success.

We know that juvenile records limit an individual's access to housing, employment, school enrollment, college admission, and professional licensure. We also know that youth of color, and specifically African American and American Indian/Alaska Native youth, are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system across Oregon. Research shows that juvenile records are more debilitating to youth of color than their white peers.

We support automatically expunging the records of young people who have not been adjudicated within a juvenile court jurisdiction but have at least one "contact". And we also think it is very important to allow a young person seeking expungement to request appointed counsel before beginning the application process. Expecting young people to fill out the complex paperwork by themselves is a significant barrier that we must address.

We must do better for all of our children. We urge you to pass this legislation now, so we can begin to make progress in removing systemic barriers around expunging juvenile records that remove opportunities for all of our children and youth to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Chris Coughlin  
Legislative Director

**Our Children Oregon**

Bringing Together Children First for Oregon and the Children's Trust Fund of Oregon

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