



# POLK COUNTY

## JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

820 SW CHURCH ST SUITE 101 ★ DALLAS, OREGON 97338-5326  
(503) 623-2349 ★ FAX (503) 831-3013

JODI MERRITT  
DIRECTOR

RICH ROBISON  
SUPERVISOR

May 7, 2021

Oregon State Legislature  
Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means Committee  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-chairs Frederick and McLain and committee members,

Please accept this letter in support of the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution (OOCDR) through SB 5528. I respectfully urge you to fully fund the Public University Statewide Programs under this bill, which offers essential dispute resolution grants to local community programs throughout the State of Oregon.

Polk County is fortunate enough to have one of these essential dispute resolution programs within our community. The Victim Offender Reconciliation Program – Community Mediation Services (VORP-CMS), operated by Ken Braun, has been a positive and supportive resource within Polk County for many years, serving our community with effective mediation and conflict resolution services. In addition, Ken Braun facilitates Community Partner Staffing's involving multiple agencies within Polk County to discuss and strategize recommended plans for youth at risk of being placed outside the family home.

Polk County is highly collaborative in providing preventative and responsive measures to individuals within our community. VORP-CMS is always willing to assist agencies in case planning efforts with focus on providing an effective and positive outcome. Polk County Juvenile Department uses VORP-CMS to assist in diverting youth from further entry into the Juvenile Justice System and as a resource in determining restitution, when necessary. The Department also utilizes the Community Partner Staffing Meetings to engage our local service agencies in discussions and resource access to needed services for youth in need.

The services provided by Ken Braun and the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program – Community Mediation Services has proven effective within Polk County and I encourage you to continue to provide this program support as well. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Respectfully,

Jodi Merritt, Director  
Polk County Juvenile Department



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School of Law

May 10, 2021

Oregon State Legislature  
Education Subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means Committee  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-chairs Frederick and McLain and committee members,

The above letter of support highlights one of the fifteen community dispute resolution centers that receive grant funds through the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution. OOCDR uploaded the letter to OLIS on their behalf.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patrick Sponsler".

Patrick Sponsler, MPA  
[sponsler@uoregon.edu](mailto:sponsler@uoregon.edu)  
OOCDR Administrator

**Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution**

1515 Agate St. Eugene, OR. 97403  
541-346-1623 | [uoregon.edu](http://uoregon.edu)

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