



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 19, 2021

To: [House Committee on Education](#)
Chair, Representative Teresa Alonso Leon
Vice-Chair, Representative Courtney Neron
Vice-Chair, Representative Suzanne Weber
Re: [HB 2051](#)- Youth Development Division refinements– **Support**

LWV supports increased educational opportunity through programs for disadvantaged groups beginning at the preschool level and extending through secondary education. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable, and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right. The League published a study on Runaway and Homeless Youth in February 2007. We have followed state funding and services for at-risk youth over several decades. The LWVOR Education Coordinator and other LWVOR members have followed Education from Early Learning to the Youth Development Division (YDD) over many years, in other words pregnancy/birth to 24 years of age and higher learning.

Youth who do not finish high school have lower career earnings, reduced economic productivity, lower health outcomes, and overrepresentation in the justice system, many are BIPOC. It is exponentially costlier for the State of Oregon if a youth enters the juvenile justice system.

Refinements to the Youth Development Division included in [HB 2051](#) include enhancements by:

- increasing eligible age up from 21 to 24
- adding consulted partners for rulemaking—school districts and tribes
- adding youth not on track to graduate on time, as determined by rules adopted by the Youth Development Council, removing the requirement that the youth is a “drop-out”
- adds youth that are referred by the Department of Human Services, a juvenile court, the Oregon Youth Authority, a county juvenile department, a federally recognized Indian tribe, a school district, an education service district or any other entity identified by the Youth Development Council by rule.

The valuable work of the Youth Development Division and YDD grants are cost effective (YDD data):

- Each disconnected youth costs state and local governments about \$9,600 annually
- This cost includes lost tax revenue, costs associated with crime, healthcare, and public assistance
- The total cost of youth disconnection to Oregon in 2019 was an estimated \$508 million.

We believe that additional silo coordination and streamlined applications would benefit youth. Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Programs and youth outreach programs reside in the **Department of Education Youth Development Division**. Runaway and Homeless Youth program are within the **Department of Human Services (DHS)**. The **Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS)** agency is the recipient of federal and state funds for emergency housing for adults, families, and unaccompanied youth. Please add **Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS)** as a referral agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

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