



CARL D. MACPHERSON  
Executive Director

# METROPOLITAN PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES, INC.

February 22, 2021

To: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation  
From: Carl Macpherson, Executive Director, Metropolitan Public Defender

Re: **Support for SB 575**

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

Metropolitan Public Defender (MPD), a 501(c)(3) non-profit law firm, is the largest trial-level public defense service provider in Oregon. We have the primary public defense contracts in Multnomah and Washington Counties. As such, our more than 170-member staff provide criminal public defense for more than 15,000 cases a year. We also handle both juvenile delinquency and dependency cases in both counties.

One of MPD's divisions is the Parent Child Advocacy Division, which represents youth involved in the juvenile justice system and parents and children involved in the child welfare system. Our attorneys, case managers, legal assistants, and investigators have a deep understanding of the impact that the criminal justice system and juvenile justice system can have on a youth and their family.

Given our background and expertise, I write in **strong support of SB 575**. We believe youth who have contact with the juvenile justice system should have the opportunity to become positive members of our communities, to access education and vocational programs, to obtain employment that provides a livable wage, secure safe and stable housing, and be free from the stigma of a juvenile record that no longer defines them.

Juvenile records have far-reaching collateral consequences that impact a youth's future. These records can hinder access to housing, jobs, school enrollment, college applications, and professional licensure.<sup>1</sup> A young person who is touched by the juvenile justice system should be free from the barriers that these records create and free to pursue their future unencumbered by the chains of their past.

Oregon's juvenile justice system promotes rehabilitation and reformation for youth. A youth who successfully participates in the accountability and rehabilitative opportunities grows to become a productive and contributing member of our community. Expunction is an important step in the

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<sup>1</sup> Juvenile Law Center, *Future Interrupted: The Collateral Damage Caused by Proliferation of Juvenile Records* (2016), <https://juvenilerecords.jlc.org/juvenilerecords/documents/publications/future-interrupted.pdf>

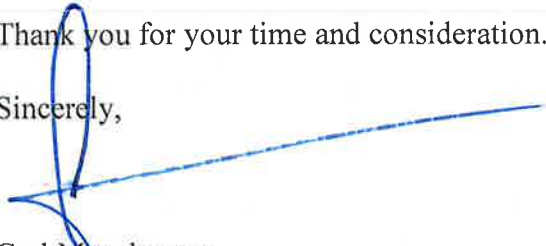
process when a youth has successfully completed probation. SB 575 allows access to attorneys so that all youth can benefit from this final step.

SB 575 will help address racial disparities and access to justice. Youth of color are overrepresented entering the juvenile justice system in Oregon.<sup>2</sup> SB 575 would allow the automatic expunction for a youth who has only had “contacts,” but no formal juvenile court involvement. Once youth of color are formally involved in the juvenile court system, they are more likely to experience the long-term consequences of a juvenile adjudication.<sup>3</sup> SB 575 will allow equal access to the courts for all youth impacted by the juvenile justice system by allowing access to court appointed counsel.

MPD believes people can change, and often do. Our goal should be to restore those who are “justice involved” to their families, their communities, and ensure they have the tools to be productive. **We support SB 575** because it meets the goal of helping the individual, and thereby, improving public safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Carl Macpherson  
Executive Director

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<sup>2</sup> Anya Sekino, Or. Youth Dev. Council Juvenile Justice: Equity Considerations 2 (2016), [http://www.oregonyouthdevelopmentcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Juvenile-Justice-Position-Paper\\_YDC.pdf](http://www.oregonyouthdevelopmentcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Juvenile-Justice-Position-Paper_YDC.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Anya Sekino, Or. Youth Dev. Council Juvenile Justice: Equity Considerations 2 (2016), [http://www.oregonyouthdevelopmentcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Juvenile-Justice-Position-Paper\\_YDC.pdf](http://www.oregonyouthdevelopmentcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Juvenile-Justice-Position-Paper_YDC.pdf)