



March 1, 2021

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation  
Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, Members of the Committee

Re: Senate Bill 397 (adult expungement) and Senate Bill 575 (juvenile expungement)

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation:

The Office of Public Defense Services (OPDS) is interested in any opportunities to move our criminal legal system forward to better and best practices that support better outcomes for clients, their families and communities, and all Oregonians. Senate Bill (SB) 397 (adult expungement) and SB 575 (juvenile expungement) propose removing barriers to record expungement in Oregon. Barriers to expungement deeply disadvantage Oregonians who have otherwise completed their conditions within the criminal justice system, particularly adults and youth from Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color, who are overrepresented in our justice systems.

A 2020 [University of Michigan study](#) found that, along with very low recidivism rates, adults who successfully achieved record expungement were employed more often and earned better wages than prior to expungement.<sup>1</sup> These benefits for individuals, families, communities, and local economies, were demonstrated within only one year following expungement. A 2020 [national assessment of Oregon's juvenile justice system](#) urged the State of Oregon to pursue juvenile record expungement improvements as a means to remove barriers to access to justice for Oregon youth.<sup>2</sup>

Record expungement continues to be a key barrier for Oregonians who seek to be active members of their families and communities through employment, housing, volunteer work, participating in their children's schools and activities – the things that keep folks engaged and well, and far less likely to return to the criminal legal system.

Thank you for your time,

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<sup>1</sup> [Expungement of Criminal Convictions: An Empirical Study](#), 9 (2020).

<sup>2</sup> [Advancing Youth Justice: An Assessment of Access to and Quality of Juvenile Defense Counsel in Oregon](#), 75 (2020).