

March 1, 2023

To: House Committee On Judiciary
From: April Spain

Re: **Testimony in Support of HB 2327**

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and members of the Committee,

Based on the evidence of developmental science, our commitment to human rights, and in the interests of racial justice, Oregon should establish a minimum age of prosecution of children of 12 years old.

Children under 12 who face involvement in the criminal legal system are not likely to understand or gain from prosecution and detention. Harsh punishment is not an effective way to correct misbehavior in children whose brains are still immature.

In fact, research shows that children face many harmful impacts when they are subjected to prosecution and put in juvenile detention centers. They must endure greater challenges in accessing education and employment, their physical and mental health worsen, and they are at higher risk of abnormal health development.

Oregon must join 24 states around the country in establishing a minimum age of prosecution to protect our children from the harm done by prosecution and detention. We can better support our children by providing them and their families with appropriate support and services to address the causes and consequences of their actions.

I urge you to adopt the -1 amendment and pass House Bill 2327 out of committee with a "Do Pass" recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

April Spain