



Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association
Representing Oregon's County Juvenile Departments
www.ojdda.org

❖ Molly Rogers, President

❖ Christina McMahan, President-Elect

❖ Jim Goodwin, Past President

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OJDDA

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DATE: March 2, 2023

TO: House Judiciary Committee Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Wallan and Andersen,
Members of the Committee

FROM: Christina McMahan, President-Elect, Oregon Juvenile Department Directors'
Association

RE: OJDDA Supports House Bill 2327 and -1 Amendment

My name is Christina McMahan and I am the Juvenile Director for Clackamas County. Today I am here to represent the Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association in my capacity as their President-Elect, to voice our association's support for HB 2327.

Twenty-four states have already established a minimum age for prosecution of juveniles, but in Oregon, we do not have a statutory minimum age for prosecution. This bill provides an opportunity to make an important change to Oregon's juvenile justice system that recognizes child development research, the impacts of trauma on young children and their unmet behavioral health needs, and to discontinue the practice in our current system of knowingly placing young children on a trajectory that greatly increases the likelihood of deeper penetration into the criminal justice system and poor outcomes into adulthood.

HB 2327 has several key provisions:

- **It sets a minimum age of 12 years old in order for a delinquency petition to be filed in juvenile court.**
- **It repeals the ability for a child 11 years old or younger to be placed in juvenile detention.** Detention centers are not designed for nor are they developmentally appropriate for elementary age children.
- **It specifies that county juvenile departments may provide preventative services and interventions for these children.**

- **It appropriates funding to county juvenile departments for these preventative services and interventions through the Oregon Youth Development Division.** County juvenile departments do not currently receive funding to serve this younger population.
- **It contains a provision that clearly states that “In addition to, and not in lieu of services provided by the Oregon Health Authority, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Education, a county juvenile department may provide preventative services” to a child younger than 12.** Some parties in opposition to this bill believe that filing a delinquency petition is an unfortunate but necessary tool to get other agencies to the table that are already funded and mandated to provide services to these children. The OJDDA disagrees. We believe that with commitment and leadership, the respective state agencies, county juvenile departments, and local partners can work collaboratively to do the right thing to make sure these children and their families get the services, supports, and help they need to prevent these children from becoming part of the juvenile justice system, rather than intentionally placing them on that pathway.

Nelson Mandela said “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.” Oregon can do better for these children. We urge you to pass HB 2327.