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To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
From: Lisa Kay Williams, Supervising Attorney
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Re: **SB 816**

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

Youth, Rights & Justice (YRJ), a non-profit public defense provider, has been dedicated exclusively to juvenile law for 50 years. Each year, we provide holistic, client-centered representation to hundreds of children, youth, and parents in Oregon's juvenile court system.

YRJ Supports Senate Bill 816

Oregon's juvenile justice system is tasked with providing "a continuum of services that emphasize prevention of further criminal activity by the use of early and certain sanctions, reformation and rehabilitation programs and swift and decisive intervention in delinquent behavior." ORS 419C.005.

By adding "youth" to statutes governing county diversion plans, SB 816 allows the juvenile justice system to meet the legislative mandate by authorizing juvenile departments to offer services, available through diversion plans, as soon as a child is referred to them instead of waiting until adjudication occurs.

The term "youth" defines children who are alleged to have committed an act that, if committed by an adult, would be a violation of law. ORS 419A.004(41).

The term "adjudicated youth" refers to children who have been formally found to be within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court under the delinquency code. ORS 419A.004(1).

We urge the committee to support SB 816.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.