

February 17, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 816 - Regarding local juvenile diversion plans and plans for juvenile crime prevention

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

I'd like to thank the Committee for your support of the Juvenile Crime Prevention Program in Oregon. Multnomah County supports SB 816 because it addresses the critical need for comprehensive services to support at-risk youth and families to reduce juvenile delinquency through the Juvenile Crime Prevention Program (JCP). The modifications presented in this bill will expand support services for at-risk youth, reducing the number of youth that become justice involved.

The JCP is designed with a critical objective: to significantly reduce juvenile arrests, minimize recidivism among youth offenders, and decrease the reliance on secure facilities operated by the Oregon Youth Authority. By investing in additional funding for the JCP program provided by this bill, Multnomah County can not only sustain but also enhance its current slate of prevention and intervention programs, providing tailored services for high-risk, high-need, youth and their families, empowering them with the tools and resources necessary to make positive life choices.

In Multnomah County, the JCP currently resources essential services such as Community Healing Initiative - Early Intervention (CHI-EI), Gang Intervention Services, Automatic Expunctions, and Diversion/Informal services for youth who have not been formally adjudicated. Over 273 youth have been served through these programs that play a crucial role in providing at-risk youth with necessary support and resources to navigate challenges without further involvement in the juvenile justice system. If SB 816 does not pass, our ability to deliver these vital services will be limited, negatively impacting at-risk youth. Ensuring that these services remain robust and accessible is imperative to our community's overall safety and well-being in line with the Department of Community Justice's vision, *Community Safety through Positive Change*.

Thank you for considering our comments on SB 816. We believe that this proposal is an investment in the future of our community. By reinforcing our commitment to at-risk youth through enhanced services and programs, we establish a foundation for stronger, safer neighborhoods and a brighter future for the youth of Multnomah County, and Oregon. We respectfully request your support for SB 816.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kyla Armstrong-Romero
Director, Juvenile Services Division
Multnomah County Department of Community Justice

Submitted by: Stacy Cowan, stacy.cowan@multco.us