



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

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Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) urges you to support Senate Bill 816. SB 816 is a technical correction to a 2021 drafting error that unintentionally limited how Juvenile Crime Prevention (JCP) funds can be used by our county juvenile department partners.

JCP funds are pass through dollars that are provided to county juvenile departments to help divert youth from a commitment to OYA and meant to support a continuum of interventions for youth who are juvenile justice involved. These funds are managed and dispersed by OYA. OYA works closely with counties to develop JCP plans that are accountable to the stated goal of diverting youth from OYA custody. This partnership allows county juvenile departments and OYA to work together to ensure that youth can receive the most appropriate services to, whenever possible and appropriate, avoid commitment. This ultimately helps OYA maintain a population of youth in OYA closed custody that is under the budgeted and allocated bed count.

Prior to 2021, the language in ORS 420.017 stated those funds could be used on "delinquent youth" which was not statutorily defined and allowed for flexibility that included youth not adjudicated by the juvenile court to be delinquent. When the language was changed to "youth offender" in 2021, and then "adjudicated youth" in 2023, it inadvertently required counties to adjudicate youth to receive any services funded by JCP dollars. This prevents these dollars from being used for prevention and early intervention.

The work of county juvenile departments is critical to the success of the juvenile legal system in Oregon. They provide invaluable prevention, intervention, and supervision at the local level to youth who are referred for criminal behavior. SB 816 makes an important technical fix that gives juvenile department's the ability to engage in prevention and early intervention work, as they did before 2021, ultimately diverting youth from OYA commitment.

Please support SB 816 to allow more flexibility in the use of diversion funds by county juvenile departments to meet the needs of youth.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Martin
Legislative Coordinator