



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Oregon Youth Authority

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



The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) asks for your support of Senate Bill 818. OYA needs to build resources to respond to the rising mental health acuity level of the youth in our care. SB 818 broadens OYA's options for contracting approaches with community mental health providers, ultimately helping us ensure that we have the right placement **when needed** for the youth in our custody.

OYA is currently statutorily restricted to a fee-for-service model of contracting for placements for our youth. While this model can work for established providers with resources and access to capital, it does not work well for new providers trying to build a new or specialized program and is especially burdensome for providers from historically disenfranchised communities. OYA strives to build a diversity of placement and service options to meet the needs of all our youth. That currently requires us to find and work with new providers, including those that come from the same communities as our youth.

SB 818 gives OYA the ability to use a guaranteed capacity model of contracting for placements for our youth. Under this model OYA would pay the provider a flat rate for a guaranteed number of beds. This ensures that OYA has increased access to placements--particularly in times of crisis. The bill also allows OYA broader granting authority to meet the needs of the agency and carry out our duties and functions.

The Oregon Department of Human Services currently has the ability to use a capacity or fee-for-service contracting model. SB 818 would align the contract options between the two agencies. This is particularly important as we have overlap in the providers we use.

With the additional contracting and granting options SB 818 provides, we can ensure youth get to the right placement to meet their needs, increase their chance of success, and increase public safety.

We urge your support of SB 818 so that OYA can have more contract and grant options with providers and help us be responsive to the needs of the youth in our care.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Martin
Legislative Coordinator