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To: House Committee on Judiciary
From: Christa Obold Eshleman, Supervising Attorney
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Re: **HB 2974**

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Wallan and Chotzen, and 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.

Through our advocacy for Oregon's children, youth, and parents, we often see the same systemic problems and we work to change the policies that contribute to these problems. One glaring systemic problem is that Black, Indigenous, Latino and other people of color are overrepresented in child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

YRJ provides this testimony opposing HB 2974 as drafted to address the concerns specific to children and teens. YRJ has appreciated the opportunity to work with the proponents of HB 2974 to provide input on our concerns regarding the juvenile-specific problem with HB 2974. We understand that an amendment will be proposed that will likely address the juvenile-specific concern.

HB 2974 would criminalize consensual conduct by teenagers that is legal for adults, including selfies. Section 2 would expand the definition of "sexually explicit conduct" for purposes of particular statutes to include even consensual images of their bodies made by teenagers. The bill includes ORS 163.670 as one of the statutes affected by the proposed broader definition of "sexually explicit conduct," which would mean that youths who make consensual images or recordings of each other for romantic purposes would be engaging in criminal conduct.

YRJ is opposed to the exploitation of children. However, as drafted, HB 2474 would criminalize children and their similar-aged romantic partners. Teenagers would face felony penalties and possibly sex offender registration for behavior that is legal for adults.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.