

Submitter: willie hall  
On Behalf Of: YAPINC  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Public Safety  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5041

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 5041, which provides critical funding for the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) and its programs serving justice-involved youth. My name is Willie Hall, and I am Director at Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing community-based alternatives to youth incarceration and institutional placement. YAP partners with OYA to support youth and families in Oregon, ensuring young people receive the necessary services to succeed in school, career pathways, and beyond-Chair Senator Kate Lieber, Co-Chairs Representative Tawna Sanchez, and Co-Vice Chairs Senator Fred Girod, Representative David Gomberg, Representative Greg Smith, and Members of the Committee

HB 5041 is a vital investment in the future of Oregon's youth, particularly in education, career readiness, and workforce development. The funding allocated through this legislation will significantly impact the young people we serve in the following ways:

1. **Success in Youth Diplomas and GEDs:** Many of the youth we work with have faced significant barriers to completing their education. Through individualized support and advocacy, YAP helps young people re-engage in school, pursue their high school diplomas, or obtain their GEDs. The funding in HB 5041 will allow OYA to continue its essential work in ensuring youth education remains a top priority, ultimately leading to better life outcomes and reduced recidivism.
2. **Career and Technical Programming for OYA Youth:** Career and technical education (CTE) is a game-changer for justice-involved youth, providing them with hands-on skills and industry-recognized credentials that lead to meaningful employment. Many of the youth we serve are eager to learn trades such as construction, culinary arts, and automotive repair. The continuation and expansion of CTE programs, supported through this bill, are crucial in preparing youth for self-sufficiency and reducing their reliance on the justice system.
3. **Community College and Higher Education Enrollment:** Access to postsecondary education is a critical pathway for young people to break cycles of incarceration and poverty. HB 5041's funding supports initiatives that guide OYA youth toward enrollment in community colleges and universities, providing them with opportunities to build brighter futures. YAP is committed to mentoring and assisting youth as they navigate these pathways, and continued investment in this area will ensure that more

young people can access and succeed in higher education.

4. Career and Workforce Readiness Supported by VESoy Funding: The Vocational and Educational Services for Older Youth (VESoy) program plays a crucial role in

preparing young people for independence and financial stability. Through workforce development programs, job training, and employment connections, VESoy funding equips youth with the tools they need to transition successfully into adulthood. HB 5041's support for community-based programming will help sustain and grow these essential services, allowing YAP and other organizations to continue fostering career readiness among Oregon's justice-involved youth.

By passing HB 5041, the legislature will reaffirm its commitment to rehabilitation, education, and workforce development for justice-involved youth in Oregon. The funding outlined in this bill directly supports the services that empower young people to achieve their educational and career goals, ultimately leading to stronger communities and safer outcomes for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to support HB 5041 to ensure that Oregon's youth have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Sincerely,

Willie Hall Director Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.