



YOUTH SERVICES

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Pioneering pathways to prosperity.

Support for Senate Bill 5515

Good afternoon Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Ruiz, and members of the committee

My name is Molly Rogers, and I am before you today as the Director of Youth Services in Wasco County. It is my pleasure to come before you as the longest serving juvenile director with a long history with the Juvenile Crime Prevention initiative.

From the inception, the Juvenile Crime Prevention initiative prioritizes youth who are high-risk to enter the juvenile justice system. These funds support programming in all 36 counties and the nine (9) federally recognized Tribes, allowing for a hybrid funding approach with a minimum base funding and additional funding based on population for the more urban counties. The planning for the JCP funding is a collaboration across community and county stakeholders through the approval by the Local Public Safety Coordinating Councils (LPSCC), and county governing bodies.

In Wasco County we use the limited JCP funding to leverage additional local and grant funding to offer a prevention and intervention program for the middle school youth in Wasco County. The program, What's Strong with You! has been successful in working with schools, families, and youth by increasing students' attachment to school, decrease barriers including anxiety, school failure and isolation.

JCP funding is one leg of a chair that supports maintaining public safety and the number of youth entering the more costly and restrictive placement of youth who are in the juvenile justice system. JCP is evaluated every biennium by a third-party entity with a validated tool. JCP prevention funding is working. County juvenile departments have reduced the placement of youth in the Youth Correctional Facilities from 892 youth in April of 2010 to 372 youth reported in closed custody on March 24, 2025. This data comes from the Juvenile Justice Information System.

Youth Development Oregon also acts as Oregon's State Advisory Group, the SAG, which supports the juvenile justice system by ensuring Oregon upholds the Federal OJJDP six core requirements. Oregon has been compliant with the core requirements, allowing Oregon to receive full federal funding and bring best practices for juvenile justice initiatives. Wasco County was recently successful in applying for and receiving one of the federal pass through projects with the new Assessment Center. This model allows service navigation for youth and families before they enter the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

I strongly request and recommend Continued Service Level funding for the County and Tribal Juvenile Crime Prevention funding. It truly is the only funding stream that provides direct services to youth all across the State. This small investment allows a significant impact for both youth in the community and reducing the need for much more expensive resources.

Sincerely,