



March 1, 2018

KATE BROWN
Governor

Roberta Dunn
Executive Director
FACT Oregon
13455 SE 97th Avenue
Clackamas, OR 97015

Roberto Gutierrez
Policy Director
Causa
700 Marion Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Deborah Smith Arthur
Associate Professor
Portland State University
University Studies, CH 137
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207

Rakeem Washington
Director, Opening Doors Project
PCC – Cascade Campus
705 N. Killingsworth Street
Portland, OR 97217

Aliza B. Kaplan
Director
Criminal Justice Reform Clinic
Lewis & Clark Law School
10015 SW Terwilliger Blvd.,
MSC 51
Portland, OR 97219

Andy Ko
Executive Director
Partnership for Safety and Justice
825 NE 20th Avenue, Suite 250
Portland, OR 97232

Chris Bouneff
Executive Director
NAMI Oregon
4701 SE 24th Avenue, Suite E
Portland, OR 97202

Mark McKechnie
Executive Director
Youth, Rights & Justice
1785 NE Sandy Blvd., Suite 300
Portland, OR 97232

Dani Ledezma
Interim Executive Director
Coalition of Communities of
Color
221 NW 2nd Avenue, Suite 303
Portland, OR 97209

Bobbin Singh
Executive Director
Oregon Justice Resource Center
PO Box 5248
Portland, OR 97208

Bob Joondeph
Executive Director
Disability Rights Oregon
610 SW Broadway, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97205

Kimberly McCullough
Policy Director
ACLU of Oregon
PO Box 40585
Portland, OR 97240

Dear Advocates:

Thank you for your letter dated February 27, 2018, regarding juvenile justice in Oregon.

As someone who was once a practitioner in juvenile court, I care very deeply about the issues you raise in your letter. It is my expectation that all youth in Oregon custody be treated fairly and with dignity. Prior to the release of Disability Rights Oregon's (DRO) report regarding NORCOR, I requested a holistic assessment of Oregon's juvenile justice system by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention via the Center for Coordinated Assistance to States. Ultimately, the American Institutes for Research were tasked with this comprehensive assessment, and the interviews are ongoing and include several members of the groups in your coalition.

The assessment itself is being guided using the National Research Council's *Reforming Juvenile Justice* as a guide. The evaluation will include a review of the conditions, protocols, and practices at NORCOR, along with county juvenile detention facilities throughout the state. The findings and recommendations from this statewide review will help inform ways Oregon can reduce the number of youth in detention and lower juvenile recidivism rates, while keeping our communities safer and setting youth on a path for success.



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Your letter specifically raises the issue of DRO's report regarding the NORCOR facility. Since I became aware of the report, I ordered the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) not to place any youth under their supervision at NORCOR. I am aware that since the report, NORCOR has taken steps to update their policies and improve. But, I will not rescind my order until I am assured the facility is safe and appropriate. Furthermore, NORCOR Juvenile Directors Oversight Committee agrees that more must be done to ensure the healthy development of youth, and has already started exploring consulting firms that will perform an independent review of NORCOR. My office, along with OYA and the Youth Development Council (YDC) are fully committed to improving conditions for youth in custody throughout Oregon, and both agencies have agreed to assist with funding that consultation.

Finally, and more broadly to the topic of county juvenile detention facilities, the YDC, in partnership with the Oregon Juvenile Department Directors Association, has initiated a process to review the existing detention guidelines. A goal of this review is to enhance and improve the guidelines by including current best practices some of which are outlined in your letter. The groups have met once already, and I am assured that stakeholders from the advocacy community will be included in this process.

Oregon is a state that is at its best when all stakeholders are at the table, working together toward change, and I know that we can look forward to that collaboration when it comes to improving the juvenile justice system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Brown" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Governor Kate Brown