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OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

For Immediate Release
May 25, 2017

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Oregon Legislature Seeks to End Juvenile Shackling

Senate Bill 846 passed the Oregon Senate unanimously

SALEM – The Oregon House of Representatives unanimously joined the Oregon Senate today in voting to end the practice of shackling juveniles during court proceedings.

[Senate Bill 846](#) prohibits the use of physical restraints on youth in juvenile court proceedings and while being transported when in the custody of the Department of Human Services or Oregon Health Authority, except under certain circumstances.

“Research shows there is no safety benefit for this practice and it can actually cause long-term damage for juveniles,” co-sponsor Rep. Jennifer Williamson (D-NW & SW Portland) said. “This includes higher rates of recidivism and the potential for negative developmental effects.”

According to best estimates, as many as 100,000 children are shackled during court proceedings nationwide every year. This despite mounting evidence from across the country that the practice does nothing to improve the safety of the courtroom or the juvenile.

- Miami-Dade County ended the practice in 2006. [Since that time, more than 25,000 children have appeared in juvenile court without injury or escape.](#)
- In New Orleans, after shackling reform there were even budget cuts that reduced the number of security officers. Despite the fact that [more than 4,000 juveniles go through the court system every year, there have been no incidents.](#)

“The Supreme Court has already ruled that shackling adults violates their presumption of innocence. It is time for us to apply that standard to children,” co-sponsor Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Happy Valley) said. “In addition to being humiliating, the long-term impacts can be devastating for those involved. While some counties in Oregon already prohibit this practice, it is time for the entire state to end it once and for all.”

Since 2014, 10 states have passed legislation ending this practice while another 13 either have legislation or have changed the practice through rule or case law.

“I believe this important step for Oregon will bring us in line with accepted national standards and move our juvenile justice system forward in a positive manner,” Rep. Williamson added.

The bill passed 54-0 and now goes to the Governor.

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