



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Adult prison is the wrong place to put Oregonians under 18** *HB 2251 prohibits incarcerating minors in Department of Corrections facilities*

SALEM – Adult prisons aren't the place for youth who wind up in trouble with the law, and the Oregon Senate voted today to send a bill to stop that harmful practice to Gov. Kate Brown for her signature.

House Bill 2251 – which passed by a 23-7 vote on the Senate floor today – prohibits incarcerating anyone younger than 18 in a Department of Corrections institution under any circumstances. Those individuals would be incarcerated, more appropriately, at an Oregon Youth Authority facility instead. Research indicates that placing youth with adult offenders increases recidivism and risk of harm to the minor.

“Kids shouldn't be put in adult prisons under any circumstances, and this bill is meant to prevent that,” said Sen. James Manning (D-Eugene), who carried the bill in the Senate. “When you take a kid who's gotten into trouble for something and put them around older, more experienced, prison populations, it can lead to horrific experiences for the youth. They can become targets of abuse, and it also doesn't help them rehabilitate. Instead of learning how to become better contributors to society, they can learn the tricks of the criminal trade. Both of those are unacceptable options for our young people and all of our kids deserve better.”

Currently, if a person is younger than 18 while committing an offense – and younger than 20 when they are sentenced to a Department of Corrections facility – their physical custody must be transferred to Oregon Youth Authority if one of the following conditions applies:

- The person will complete the sentence before turning 25; or

- Department of Corrections and Oregon Youth Authority determine that incarceration at an adult facility is inappropriate because of the person's age, maturity level, mental or emotional condition or risk of physical harm to the person.

Once a person is placed under Oregon Youth Authority custody, they currently remain there until the circumstances change so that the person is eligible to be moved to an adult facility. House Bill 2251 adds the requirement that a person's physical custody be transferred to OYA if the person is younger than 18 at the time of sentencing and beginning incarceration. Those transferred to the physical custody of OYA would not be returned to the Department of Corrections until reaching the age of 18.

HB 2251 now goes to Gov. Kate Brown for signature.

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