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Reentry services help youth in custody transition to adult life

HB 2579 authorizes reentry services to youth incarcerated in OYA facilities

SALEM – The Oregon Senate voted to authorize the Oregon Youth Authority to provide services that will help reduce recidivism and give youth who have been incarcerated a better chance to lead productive lives.

House Bill 2579 – which passed by a 30-0 vote on the Senate floor today – authorizes the Oregon Youth Authority to offer reentry support and services to youth committed to Department of Corrections custody, but who are serving their incarceration at an OYA facility.

“It is important to help young people who have made mistakes for a variety of reasons get back on their feet and establish themselves in society,” said Sen. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), who carried the bill in the Senate. “We know that successful reentry starts while the young person is still incarcerated. A good reentry plan begins prior to release and continues under close supervision after release. This bill will prevent the discontinuity and disruption that unfortunately is occurring today. It just makes good sense.”

The bill provides for discontinuing services when the youth turns 25 or the sentence is complete, whichever date is earlier.

Currently, a person convicted in adult court is allowed to serve the sentence at Oregon Youth Authority, if the person committing the offense as a minor was sentenced before turning 20 years old, but a person may not remain in OYA’s custody – legally or physically – after turning 25. When a person in custody with OYA turns 25, that person’s custody is returned to the Department of Corrections.

Under current law, those individuals are supervised upon release by the State Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision, even though in some youths' cases they never served any of the sentence in an adult incarceration facility. House Bill 2579 authorizes OYA to provide these supports and programs to youth in DOC custody, but who serve their incarceration time with OYA.

The bill – championed by Rep. Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis) in the House of Representatives – passed the House on a unanimous vote.

HB 2579 now goes to Gov. Kate Brown for signature.

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