

Jazmine Rogers testimony on SB 2200

The intention of SB 367 was to transform the juvenile justice system -going backward by allowing judges to extend sentence lengths sets us back in that process.

SB 367 gives us a chance (as a state) to build better programs for young people and to do better in treating their needs and situations

It's also important to remember the neuroscience aspect. The brain development of young people is not complete until age 25. Young people are not physiologically the same as say a 37 year old. The prefrontal cortex (a.k.a. the "upstairs brain") controls rational decision-making, while the amygdala (the "downstairs brain") takes over in moments of fear or perceived threat. The amygdala is the center for our fight or flight responses. Prefrontal cortex growth starts at puberty and continues until about age 25, which means that young people are still developing their ability to regulate intense emotions and operate from the rational brain instead of their survival instincts. This isn't a rhetorical argument - extensive scientific research shows how trauma affects our brains, with long-lasting impacts on mental health. If our juvenile justice system continues to prioritize punitive measures against young people, then it is actively causing more trauma to young people rather than supporting them in healing.

Incarceration doesn't prevent repeat offenses because it doesn't get at the root causes of why young people are committing crimes in the first place

We need options that heal and support young people. Punitive consequences cause more harm than good.

Our system is very punitive, which is the easy option for the State because it lets people off the hook for reflecting on the life situations young people are experiencing or the facility conditions that are harming them.

To address the argument that we want to use "kiddy gloves" with repeat offenders:

A small percentage of young people are committing violent crimes, and many of them are actually victims of violence who end up in the juvenile system while also interfering in various systems *before* their situation escalated to committing a crime.

We need to remember young people are still learning so much every day about the world, including how to survive in it. Young people are affected by the community and social context around them. Young people need a variety of preventative and support services - mental health care, anger management resources, restorative approaches instead of punitive, and resources that empower young people to improve their lives even in difficult circumstances.

Locking people up as a punishment increases trauma and usually pushes people farther down a path into recurring interaction with the justice system. Whether it's in community corrections or a place like the states youth prison (KJCC).

Here's a hypothetical question for you all: Why haven't we allowed any amendments to SB 367 in the past 5 years? Let's not go backwards, we must continue to progress if we are to be a state that truly cares for its children – all its children.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for you today.