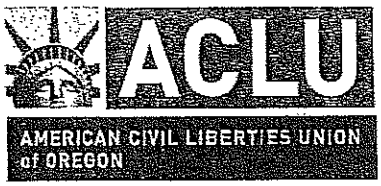


AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
OF OREGON

P.O. BOX 40585
PORTLAND, OR 97240
T/503.227.3186

P.O. BOX 50426
EUGENE, OR 97405
T/541.345.6162

WWW.ACLU-OR.ORG
INFO@ACLU-OR.ORG

October 13, 2011

Governor John Kitzhaber, Chair
Oregon Education Investment Board
254 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97310

RE: Oregon's School-to-Prison Pipeline

Dear Governor Kitzhaber and Members of Oregon Education Investment Board:

We are organizations and individuals who are deeply concerned about Oregon's School-to-Prison Pipeline and, in particular, the negative impacts of disproportionate discipline associated with race and ethnicity in Oregon public schools.

Recent Oregon Department of Education data shows a significantly higher incidence of suspensions, expulsions and dropouts among students of color when compared to their white peers. In fact, Oregon's students of color are disproportionately represented at every stage of the school-to-prison pipeline. As these children get somewhat older, they are more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system and the effects are amplified the higher up the justice system they move. Ultimately, our children of color are much more likely to be incarcerated as adults – at great expense to the state.

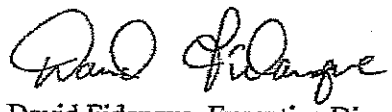
We know that your charge is to recommend an educational investment strategy designed to improve defined learning outcomes for all of Oregon's students. During your deliberations, we urge you to pay special attention to improvements that need to be made in order to eliminate disproportionate impacts related to race and ethnicity now and in the future.

We hope you will agree that it is not enough to simply make changes at the pre-kindergarten level and then wait for those changes to ripple through the system. Oregon needs strategic investment at all levels of education to ensure we close the achievement gap for students of color. There are students today who are being subjected to disproportionate discipline that are being pushed out of our education system and into the criminal justice system. It is far more cost

effective – and humane – to adequately educate all of our children than it is to incarcerate them later.

We have been working with the Oregon Department of Education to make school disciplinary data more accessible to the public and policy makers. If you would like more background information on this topic, please feel free to contact us through David Fidanque, Executive Director, ACLU of Oregon at 541-683-9277, or by e-mail to bsouza@aclu-or.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David Fidanque, Executive Director, ACLU of Oregon

Additional signers:
Bonnie Souza, Program Associate for Racial Justice, ACLU of Oregon
Claire Syrett, Field Director, ACLU of Oregon
Marcus Mundy, President and CEO, Urban League of Portland
Delores Pigsley, Chairman, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
Sheila Warren, President, Portland Parent Union
Clifford Walker, Commissioner, Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
Sue Levin, Oregon Executive Director, Stand for Children
Dana Hepper, Oregon Advocacy Director, Stand for Children
Kim Melton, Oregon Communications and Policy Director, Stand for Children
David Rogers, Executive Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice
Eduardo Angulo, Executive Director, Salem/Keizer Coalition for Equality
Guadalupe Quinn, Immigrant Rights Advocacy Program (Amigos MSC)
Henry Luvert, President, Eugene Springfield NAACP
Arbrella Luvert, Youth Works Chair, Eugene Springfield NAACP
Tammy Skubinna, Co-Chair, Hispanic Advisory Committee, Linn-Benton
Mary Daly-Piehl, Parent
Artemio (Art) Paz, Jr., APAZ Architect, AIA

Casa Latinos Unidos de Benton County
NAACP- Corvallis/ Albany
NAACP - Salem/ Keizer
Siwash Resources