

February 22, 2016

Okanogan County Commissioners  
123 5th Ave. N  
Okanogan, WA 98840



Re: Okanogan Juvenile Detention Center

Dear Country Commissioners,

I am writing to express my concerns over the possible relocation of Okanogan's Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) to Martin Hall in Medical Lake. I may not be an expert in juvenile issues, but I do have personal experiences with the system. My older brother who spent time in and out of juvenile detention in the early 70's, was relocated to a higher security detention center located outside of our community. Not only did this make it harder for my mother and father to visit, it took away his support network that might have made a difference in his life. In addition, he was put in a facility that had juveniles with more serious crimes than he, which in my opinion set him on a course of adverse life decisions.

Under the Juvenile Justice Act of 1977, RCW 13.40.038(l) provides: "It is the policy of this state that all county juvenile detention facilities provide a humane, safe, and rehabilitative environment and that unadjudicated YOUTH REMAIN IN THE COMMUNITY whenever possible, consistent with public safety and provisions of chapter 13.40 RCW". It makes it clear that Okanogan County is required to provide for "necessary treatment, supervision and custody for juvenile offenders" (RCW13.40.010 (2)(f). Okanogan county is also required to "provide for the handling of juvenile offenders BY THE COMMUNITIES whenever consistent with public safety. RCW 13.40.010 (2)(g).

There have been great strides toward improving and creating evidence-based local support programs for juvenile youth. Incarcerated youth in Okanogan County currently have support services such as (Functional Family Therapy, Okanogan Support Center, etc,) which have proven to be effective at reducing the rate of recidivism. I believe that it would be detrimental to relocate these juveniles because it will take away important and NECESSARY local community services, resources and support. Relocating the juvenile youth would also create more obstacles for their families to support their children when they reintegrate back into their community. I strongly recommend not moving the JDC to Martin Hall.

Sincerely,

Teresa J. Castner  
15 Country Road  
Mazama, WA 98833