

Testimony to House Committee on Consumer Protection and Ge

Related to HB 4091 Criminal Records Checks

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My name is Jan Aho. I was the Director of the Pearl Buck Preschool in Eugene, a position I held from Sept. 1994 until I was hired as Executive Director of Pearl Buck Center in February 2010.

During my time as Director, I was frustrated by the cumbersome, often confusing and sometimes costly steps needed to secure Criminal Records Checks for staff. The situation has not changed. Criminal Records Checks are crucial for our organization and those who access our programs. Therefore, I welcome a more streamlined, centralized system that functions better not only for the employee, but also the organization and ultimately the vulnerable population we serve.

As Pearl Buck Center serves adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and young children whose parents have cognitive limitations in the same building, employees, substitutes and some volunteers have to complete two background checks. They have to complete one for the Child Care Division, and one from DD/MH system. Each department requires different paperwork.

The Child Care Division Criminal Records Check requires a fee of \$3. Pearl Buck Center employees also have to complete a 301 AD form for the DD/MH system. There is no fee attached to the adult background check.

Criminal Records Checks are not transferable from one state agency, department or program to another. An employee who worked at a school district, foster care or similar agency in Oregon and had a FBI check or criminal records check through the state police at the other organization, is required submit new paperwork. The exception is that a new employee who is already on the Child Care Registry does not have to reapply until their renewal date.

New employees seeking clearance from DD/MH who have been outside Oregon for 6 months anytime during the last 5 years have to go through an FBI background check that costs \$60. The rule for the Child Care Division is being outside Oregon for 6 months within the last 18 months requires the FBI check. Delays are not uncommon, which can be challenging when trying to fill a critical direct care position. Two fingerprint cards are required for FBI checks at a cost of \$12 per card.

As you can see, the system is cumbersome and in need of streamlining. Therefore, I fully support HB 4091, as do other service providers in Eugene and Springfield. I especially want to thank Rep. Nathanson for listening to our concerns about this issue and sponsoring House Bill 4091.

We welcome the day when there is a unified, efficient criminal records checks system in Oregon.

Jan Aho
Executive Director
Pearl Buck Center