



UNITE. EDUCATE. ADVOCATE.

The Honorable Chair Prozanski,
The Honorable Vice-Chair Kruse,

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Kruse and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the chance to testify and for your work surrounding HB 4146. The Oregon Center for Christian Voices (OCCV) unites Christians to seek God's justice in Oregon. We base our personal and public values on the life of Jesus Christ as taught to us in the Bible and advocate for policies which reflect Christ's care for the poor, the oppressed and the most vulnerable. OCCV's main focus areas are poverty, healthcare, environment and human trafficking.

As an Oregon resident and Human Trafficking head of the OCCV Legislative Committee, I worked with community stakeholders and Representative Jefferson Smith's office in developing HB 4146. Fighting for victims' rights has been a passion of mine for years. During my undergraduate studies in Human Services, I interned for a year at the Marion County District Attorney Victims Assistance office, where I case managed a plethora of sex abuse, child abuse and domestic violence cases. I saw both the short and long-term distress and obstacles, including unjust convictions, victims faced in being able to move forward with their lives. Seeing those stories compelled me to commit myself to making structural transformation occur in criminal justice systems. Today, I am completing my Masters in Public Administration and volunteering in community organizing and legislative efforts, with that goal in mind.

200,000 to 300,000 youth are sexual exploited each year in the United States, just a portion of the \$5 billion international industry of commercial sexual exploitation of children. This issue is not only rampant abroad, it is here in our backyard: it has been said that Portland has the most sex trafficking per capita in the nation. Law enforcement and advocates' statistics show that about 90% of victims interviewed in Multnomah County had some tie locally. These are our daughters.

As Rachel Lloyd says, under the law, "one child is a victim of statutory rape and another child is considered a willing participant because money was exchanged". As previously mentioned, these victims who were treated as an offender and improperly prosecuted for prostitution suffer from having that on their record. Jessica Richardson, a survivor of sex trafficking, is a great example of how convictions for crimes related to the trafficking keep such survivors from moving ahead. She is a local well-known spokesperson on the issues related to trafficking, she has a blog with her story at www.jessicarichardson.org. In moving forward, Jessica had to not only do extreme couponing to feed her five children, but start her own business because she could not get hired due to these victimization-related convictions. She is just one of many survivors being continually re-victimized by these barriers caused by our system that should focus as much on justice as on criminals.

I believe it will be worth it if only one victim is able to move forward with their lives.
Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 4146.

Sincerely,
Lindsay Nelson