



DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON

April 8, 2013

TO: Rep. Carolyn Tomei, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Housing

FR: Bob Joondeph, DRO Executive Director

RE: HB 3032

Disability Rights Oregon strongly supports passage of HB 3032 which enhances and extends the protections for children that are provided by ORS 419B.010.

ORS 419B.010 requires any public or private official having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the official comes in contact has suffered abuse or that any person with whom the official comes in contact has abused a child to immediately report or cause a report to be made to DHS or local law enforcement.

ORS 419B.020 states that if the Department of Human Services or a law enforcement agency receives a report of child abuse, the department or the agency shall immediately cause an investigation to be made to determine the nature and cause of the abuse of the child. If the alleged abuse occurs in a child care facility, DHS and law enforcement must coordinate their efforts, the Child Care Division must be notified of the complaint and the results of the investigation must be reported to the Child Care Division.

HB 3032 requires the same level of coordination for school children to assure that alleged child abuse in a school is investigated. The bill states that if alleged child abuse occurs in a school, DHS or law enforcement must notify the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission and the Department of Education, must jointly determine which agency will investigate and must report the outcome of the investigation to The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission and the Department of Education.

Disability Rights Oregon conducted an investigation of alleged abuse of a child with disabilities in the Centennial School District and found that an objective and timely investigation was not conducted. An electronic copy of the investigation has been provided to this committee. We believe that the same degree of communication and coordination that is required by law for child care facilities should be required for all of our school children in order to assure their safety from abuse in school. HB 3032 will do this.

Thank you for this opportunity to promote greater safety for our school children.