

February 18, 2013

The Honorable Jeff Baker  
Judiciary Committee  
Oregon State Legislature

Re: Support for House Bill 2335

Mr. Chairman Baker and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for your hard work surrounding HB 2335. 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.

Since 2009, OCCV has supported and advocated for laws which seek to protect victims human trafficking. As an Oregon resident and member of OCCV's Legislative Committee, I have been following the development of HB 2335.

Fighting human trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children has been a passion for some time. In the Bible, God cries out for a response from his people in Psalm 82:3-4, saying "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." This invitation to serve and protect others has had a deep impact on how I conduct myself as a civil servant.

For seven years, I have worked for the Department of Human Services Child Welfare as a caseworker and at the Child Abuse Hotline. At DHS, I compile and track data regarding children from Oregon who have been sexually exploited for the commercial gain of others. Our data shows Oregon's children are also moved to other states by their exploiters making them more isolated from their support systems and protections.

By force, fraud, or coercion, exploiters compel their victims to engage in prostitution. Last week, a "pimp" from Portland was sentenced to life in prison after his third conviction for sexually exploiting others and abusing children. He has been sexually exploiting women and children for over 20 years in multiple states and some of his victims were 14-16 years old.

In supporting HB 2335, the crimes of promoting prostitution and compelling prostitution will have the same post prison supervision period as other sexual offense convictions. Increasing the time of community supervision is crucial in providing oversight and accountability to prevent recidivism and re-offending behavior. Extended supervision allows offenders to have increased opportunities and access to services that can decrease their likelihood of future criminal behavior. The supervision can also impose harsher penalties for violating the conditions of their supervision that can serve as an extra layer of protection for the community and our children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and as you vet through many important bills in this short February session, we at OCCV, urge you to support the passage of HB 2335.

Sincerely,

Stacy Bellavia  
Legislative Committee  
Oregon Center for Christian Voices