

February 27, 2013

TO: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

FROM: Melissa Seifer Briggs
Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers

RE: House Bill 5018

Co-Chair Winters, Co-Chair Williamson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Melissa Seifer Briggs. I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers, and I am also the Interim Executive Director for Liberty House here in Salem.

Today, I am here with other members of the Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers to support the Department of Justice's proposed increase to the Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention (CAMI) funds. CAMI funds, which come from the Criminal Fines Account, were created by the Oregon Legislature in 1993, to help support the development and operation of community-based child abuse intervention centers.

Child Abuse Intervention Centers are designed to minimize trauma to children for whom there are concerns of child abuse by coordinating the local community's response for the purpose of investigation, assessment and intervention in reports of suspected child abuse. Centers work in close partnership with law enforcement, DHS Child Welfare, and the medical and mental health communities.

Center services, based on a child's needs, are provided in a neutral, child-friendly environment and include:

- Interviews of suspected victims of child abuse
- Medical evaluations
- Mental health treatment and/or referrals
- Provision or coordination of other victim services
- Other services may be offered depending upon individual community needs.

Child abuse intervention centers depend on CAMI funds to ensure that Oregon maintains services in accordance with the proven and nationally recognized multidisciplinary team model for child abuse investigations. Our services are vital to our state, and, unfortunately, the need for our services is growing. Over the past 10 years, reports of child abuse in Oregon have risen 85% to over 74,000 in 2011. The number of confirmed victims of child abuse in Oregon is rising as well – a 38% increase to 11,599 in 2011. Last year, Centers experienced a 20% increase in assessments overall and a 35% increase in assessments for physical abuse specifically.

Despite this growing demand for our services, CAMI funds to support child abuse assessment centers have decreased 18% over the past three biennia. We are grateful that more priority is being given to our services this year, with the requested increase in CAMI funds. We ask that you support this increase and invest in intervention services like child abuse intervention centers that can help children and families recover from child abuse.

Thank you for your consideration of what is best for the children of Oregon. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have now or any time in the future.

Lobbyist: Lana Butterfield, 503-819-5800