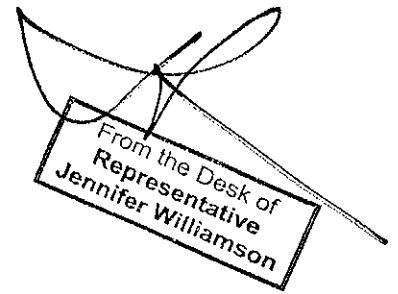


TO: Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety
FR: Brielyn Akins
DA: June 27, 2013
RE: Support for HB 2549



Co-Chairs Winters and Williamson, members of the committee,

My name is Brielyn Akins and I have worked as an advocate for survivors and an activist for ending sexual and domestic violence for almost fifteen years. I am also a member of Oregon's Sex Offender Treatment Board, am a member of the steering committee for the Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women, and am the co-founder and President of the Oregon End Violence Against Women Political Action Committee. These experiences have helped me to see the issue of public safety from many sides, including victim services, the criminal justice and corrections systems, as well as offender management and treatment, and to understand the importance of balancing each of these in order to support victims, hold offenders accountable, and keep our communities safe.

I am writing you today in support of HB 2549, which establishes risk assessment tools, creates a tiered system for classification of sex offenders, and allows certain individuals convicted of sex offenses to petition the State Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision to relieve the person from the obligation to report as a sex offender. What we know from sex offender treatment and management is that one size does not fit all. Each offender is different and each offender's risk to the community and treatment needs are unique. Having a sex offender registry is important for victim and community safety, but having an overly broad registry can tax limited law enforcement resources by requiring unnecessary supervision of certain offenders who are not predatory and do not pose a high risk to the community.

Additionally, communities may be unintentionally harmed when non-predatory offenders are included in registries. Having an overly broad registry can create a sense of fear within a community, which can lead to vigilantism against individuals who are not a risk to the community and may even prevent some offenders from accessing the treatment and services they need in order to successfully reintegrate. Overly broad registries can also perpetuate myths and create a false sense of security that a person only need look on the registry to know who is a danger; when in reality there are many offenders who are not in the registry, for a variety of reasons, and most victims are harmed by someone they know.

HB 2549 creates a tiered classification system that allows for more effective monitoring and supervision and allows limited resources to be devoted to the offenders that need the oversight the most, in order to keep victims and communities safe. I urge you to support HB 2549.

Brielyn Akins