



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Human Services

Office of the Director  
500 Summer St. NE, E-15  
Salem, OR 97301-1097  
Voice: 503-945-5600  
Fax: 503-581-6198  
TTY: 503-945-5896

DATE: February 18, 2015

TO: Chair Sara Gelsler  
Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood

FROM: Ryan Vogt, Assistant Administrator  
Office of Field Operations  
Child Welfare and Self Sufficiency Programs  
Oregon Department of Human Services  
(503) 945-6120

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 591



Chair Gelsler and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 591.

The Department of Human Services is the only agency, aside from law enforcement, with the statutory responsibility to receive and investigate concerns of abuse and neglect to the state's most vulnerable citizens: children, seniors and those with disabilities. The Department is further required to perform certain activities to plan for, and assure safety for those who have been abused and neglected, and are found to be unsafe. The Department takes this responsibility very seriously, and everyone who works for it is statutorily defined as a mandatory reporter of abuse and neglect.

The Department believes that part of its responsibility toward ensuring safety for Oregonians is preserving public trust. To this point, it is important that our employees are able to identify abuse and neglect, and that they actively comply with mandatory reporting laws to protect Oregonians. Unfortunately, there have been cases in which employees of the Department clearly failed to uphold their obligations as mandatory reporters. Where appropriate, the Department has rendered disciplinary actions to those employees, up to and including termination of employment. Recently, an Arbitrator reinstated an employee who had been terminated for failure to comply with their statutory obligation to report.

*"Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe"*

By passing Senate Bill 591, the Legislature will affirm that employees of the Department of Human Services are held to a high standard as it relates to personal responsibility for reporting abuse and neglect. Specifically, that an employee who violates their legal duty to report abuse and neglect will no longer be in a position to compromise the public trust. This is what Oregonians expect from an agency tasked with protecting our most vulnerable citizens.

I urge the Committee to pass Senate Bill 591.

Respectfully,



Ryan Vogt