

DATE: April 15, 2015

TO: Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: The Junior League of Portland

SUBJECT: HB 3040-Relating to admissibility of hearsay statements

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for hearing House Bill 3040 relating to victims of sex trafficking. The Junior League of Portland expresses its support of HB 3040, which seeks to create a hearsay exception for certain statements related to sex crimes, including human trafficking. The Junior League of Portland has focused on combatting human trafficking in Oregon by spreading awareness through our documentary, *Waiting for the Light: Portland's Sex Trafficking Crisis*, and by advocating for survivors through our annual 'Delicates Drive', which collects crucial garments for survivors.

As this committee knows from previous testimony on related bills, human sex trafficking is rampant across the country and Oregon is a large part of the problem. In the Portland metro area alone, 469 children were identified as victims of commercial sexual exploitation between 2009-2013, as reported by the Department of Human Services and the Sexual Assault Resource Center. This number does not take into consideration the rest of Oregon, adult victims, or the many incidents of sex trafficking that go unreported each day.

The present state of human trafficking in Oregon is not in sync with Oregonian culture. More needs to be done to end this crisis. HB 3040 will support victims of human trafficking and assist in the prosecution of sex trafficking perpetrators.

HB 3040 supports and protects victims of sex trafficking by allowing previously inadmissible hearsay evidence to be admissible. The Bill creates a new exception specifically for victims of sex trafficking. The Bill will assist in the prosecution of sex trafficking perpetrators and will likely result in higher conviction rates.

At the Bill's core, it increases protections for victims while also serving to aid in the prosecution of sex traffickers. HB 3040 saves victims of sex trafficking from the trauma of testifying in front of their abuser and of being cross-examined. Such testimony is often not detailed, compelling, or even accurate, given the stress placed on the victim. Thus, the Bill actually bolsters the reliability of the testimony which may be offered, and provides a much needed tool to prosecute sex traffickers.

Many examples of such hearsay exceptions already exist. In fact, HB 3040 is modeled after the hearsay exception for victims of domestic violence established over a decade ago.

MISSION: The Junior League of Portland is an organization committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.

FOCUS: The Junior League of Portland joins with community partners to positively impact the education, safety, and health of women, children, and families.

Victims of sex trafficking are an incredibly vulnerable population due to gaps in Oregon law. HB 3040 creates important and necessary protections and helps victims of sex trafficking find justice. The Junior League of Portland urges passage of HB 3040.

Sincerely,

Junior League of Portland

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