



**Children First
for Oregon**
Speaking Up for Kids Since 1997

From the Desk of
Representative
Jennifer Williamson

April 27, 2015

RE: HB 2758

Children First for Oregon strives to make long-term, systemic change by advocating for policies that improve the education, economic security, and the health of children. Children First knows that Oregon's kids need strong voices advocating for them, that's why we are working everyday to make Oregon the best place to be a kid.

HB 2758 as passed out of committee would allow every Oregonian the option to have their medical insurance billing kept private from the policy holder. Many individuals are unlikely to seek needed medical care if they know the policyholder would find out about the procedure, even if it were needed. So why is this a concern for Children First? Because no group is more likely to be affected than teenagers in abusive homes. These youth need to seek medical and mental health treatment, yet the simple act of receiving this kind of treatment could put them further at risk, if the abuser discovered that the youth had sought help.

More than 800 children aged 15 to 17 were abused in Oregon in the latest year statistics are available. That's 5.8 children for every 1000 children in that age range. This rate of abuse places Oregon among the worst third of all states in the union.¹ Stripping those under 18 from the bill will mean continued fear for these victims and greater hesitancy to seek the medical and mental health treatment they need. It will do nothing to improve the lives of these victimized children.

Please join Children First for Oregon and support HB 2758 as passed through committee.

Children First for Oregon

¹ Source: 2013 Child Maltreatment report from US Department of Health and Human Services