



8 February 2016

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Prozanski and Senators,

Children First for Oregon advocates for long-term, systemic change by advocating for policies and programs that keep children healthy and safe and strengthen families. We write in support of SB 1556, expanding the definition of physical injury for vulnerable victims.

CFFO has been publishing the Progress Report on the Status of Oregon's Children for over 20 years. In the 2016 version of the Progress Report due out on the 24th of this month, you'll read that in 2003, Oregon's child abuse rate was *exactly the same* as the national average: 12.2 per 1,000 children. Since then, the national rate has declined by more than 20% to 9.4 per 1,000 children. Meanwhile, over the same period Oregon's abuse rate moved to 11.8 per 1,000 children – a decline of only 3%.

It is imperative that the youngest and most vulnerable victims, those without voice or power, have special protections under the law. SB 1556 would provide those protections for children in substantial pain and enduring physical trauma. Additionally, the Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers is a participant in United for Kids, which publishes the Children's Agenda. United for Kids boasts 77 organizations or coalitions who are all dedicated to improving the well-being of children in Oregon.

We ask you that you join us in prioritizing children and pass SB 1556.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tonia Hunt", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Tonia Hunt
Executive Director