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Testimony on HB 2633

This testimony is in **support** of HB 2633

My name is Katherine Gotch and I am an Oregon Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Clinical Sex Offender Therapist who specializes in the evaluation and treatment of individuals who have sexually abused or are at risk to abuse. I am the co-chair of the Policy Action Team for the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence (NPEIV), the co-chair of the Public Policy Committee for the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), and a Board Member – Policy Representative for the Oregon ATSA Chapter. I am also one of the subject matter experts for the OHA – SOTB, as well as a certified Static-99R/Stable & Acute-2007 trainer. I was the principle author of HB 3233 which created the Oregon Sex Offender Treatment Board, as well as the content expert and co-author for HB 2549 which developed a risk assessment based level system for individuals convicted of sexual crimes.

When the concept for HB 3233 was first being developed, it was always the intent that the Sex Offender Treatment Board (SOTB) would outline evidence based standards of practice for sexual abuse specific therapists and provide protections against unethical practice for *all* individuals receiving sexual abuse specific treatment services, no matter their legal status. It was also the original intent for sexual abuse specific treatment to be recognized as an area of specialization which required specific training and expertise in addition to traditional mental health licensure. Public safety is increased when evidence based standards are used and practitioners receive proper training and supervision.

HB 2633 provides the necessary modifications to HB 3233 in order to rectify these unintended oversights. By expanding the jurisdiction of the Oregon Health Authority to provide consumer protection for non-adjudicated sexual abusers or those at risk to abuse and ensuring all professionals providing sexual abuse specific treatment are properly trained and supervised, public safety is enhanced and professionals engaging in unethical practices (which actually may result in an increased recidivism risk) can be held accountable. HB 2633 additionally aligns the SOTB with all other mental health licensures in Oregon with regards to defining areas of practice, exempt organizations/persons, and ensuring ethical standards of practice.