



**Testimony in support of SB 249
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Submitted by Kerry Naughton, Executive Director
February 15, 2017**

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the Committee:

My name is Kerry Naughton and I am the Executive Director of Oregon Abuse Advocates & Survivors in Service (OAASIS). OAASIS is building a movement that empowers communities to prevent child sexual abuse and help survivors live full, healthy, joyful lives. Our base is comprised of thousands of Oregonians—people who were sexually abused as children, survivors’ family members and loved ones, and community members who care about the safety, health, and well-being of survivors of child sexual abuse. We are working towards a future where all people experience a loving childhood free of abuse and trauma, and all people who have been harmed are supported on their healing journeys.

We are pleased to support SB 249. SB 249 is an important step towards helping survivors of sex trafficking rebuild their lives.

National research indicates that 1 in 4 females and 1 in 6 males are sexually abused before age 18.¹ Based on the most recent census, an estimated 813,899 Oregonians have been (or will be) sexually abused before age 18.

Most children are sexually abused by someone they know and trust. In reported cases of child sexual abuse, close to three quarters are committed by a child’s family member, family friend, or someone in the child’s “circle of trust.”² For so many children who are sexually abused, home is not safe and family members are not modeling healthy relationships.

When home is a dangerous, confusing place, child sexual abuse survivors often face unthinkable options: remain engulfed in trauma at home or flee in an attempt to find safety. This, of course, puts young survivors in vulnerable positions, including an increased risk of sex trafficking. People who have less power, decreased access, and fewer resources are often exploited and victimized at higher rates.³

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2005). Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: Data and Statistics. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace/prevalence.htm>

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families. (2007). Child Maltreatment 2005. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm05/cm05.pdf>

³ <http://www.k12.wa.us/safetycenter/CSEC/pubdocs/Sexual-Exploitation-and-Trafficking-of-Children-and-Youth.pdf>

Multiple studies estimate that 70-90% of sexually exploited children have a history of child sexual abuse.⁴

When survivors of sex trafficking—many of whom have been sexually abused over the course of their lives—are convicted of prostitution, they face additional barriers to living a safe, healthy life. The negative consequences of a conviction, as well as the stigma of prostitution, can create roadblocks to safe housing and fulfilling career options. The impacts of a prostitution conviction can follow a survivor of sex trafficking for their lifetime.

SB 249 provides a thorough, thoughtful process to remove barriers to sex trafficking survivors' success. It is vital to keep the remedy in SB 249 open for a long time so that people who have been trafficked sexually—and, often, sexually abused from a young age—have the time, safety, and support needed to be able to disclose the victimization. Sexual violence thrives in the shadows of secrecy and stigma. Coming forward to speak truth about sexual harm requires tremendous courage. When survivors of sex trafficking bravely come forward, our justice system should provide a process that recognizes the harm done to them.

SB 249 will provide this process. We hope you'll join us in supporting SB 249. Thank you for your time and consideration.

⁴<https://www.fcasv.org/sites/default/files/Child%20Physical%20and%20Sexual%20Abuse%20as%20a%20Common%20Factor%20for%20Domestic%20Minor%20Sex%20Trafficking%20Tavrn%20Mastreaan.pdf>