



**Testimony in support of SB 250
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 250. SB 250 is an important step towards helping survivors of sex trafficking rebuild their lives.

For many people who have been trafficked sexually, life has been traumatizing from an early age. There is a strong correlation between child sexual exploitation, including sex trafficking, and prior child sexual abuse victimization. Multiple studies estimate that 70-90% of sexually exploited children have a history of child sexual abuse.¹

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.

Sabrina, a 17-year-old survivor of child sexual abuse and sex trafficking, explained her untenable situation this way: “It’s not because he’s my stepfather. It’s because when I was younger he tried to have sex with me...my mother—she knew that...she knew that he was trying to have sex with me and

¹<https://www.fcasv.org/sites/default/files/Child%20Physical%20and%20Sexual%20Abuse%20as%20a%20Common%20Fact%20for%20Domestic%20Minor%20Sex%20Trafficking%20Taryn%20Mastreaan.pdf>

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>

she didn't do anything about it...So if I can't trust you and I can't trust my mother, then what am I doin' here? I left...I was sleepin' outside...train stations, shelters...everywhere; like...anywhere but there."³

When survivors of child sexual abuse flee dangerous homes, they continue to remain in vulnerable positions and are at an increased risk of sex trafficking. People who have less power, decreased access, and fewer resources are often exploited and victimized at higher rates.⁴ Too often, a cycle of sexual harm at home is replaced by a cycle of sexual harm outside of the home.

The way our justice system responds to victims of sex trafficking is incredibly important. SB 250 provides an affirmative defense to the crime of prostitution for victims of trafficking, described in O.R.S. 163.266 (1)(b) or (c). **SB 250 is an important piece in our justice system's ability to address sex trafficking and our communities' ability to support survivors to live safe, full, healthy lives.**

We believe that victims of sex trafficking deserve our community's support to live safe, healthy, lives, not the structural barriers and stigma associated with a prostitution conviction. We hope you'll join us in supporting SB 250. Thank you for your time and consideration.

³ <https://www.fcasv.org/sites/default/files/Child%20Physical%20and%20Sexual%20Abuse%20as%20a%20Common%20Factor%20for%20Domestic%20Minor%20Sex%20Trafficking%20Taryn%20Mastrean.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.k12.wa.us/safetvcenter/CSFC/pubdocs/Sexual-Exploitation-and-Trafficking-of-Children-and-Youth.pdf>