



Testimony in support of SB 318
Senate Education Committee
Submitted by Kerry Naughton, Executive Director
February 16, 2017

Chair Roblan, Vice-Chair Linthicum, 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 relationships are based on respect, consent, and equity.

We are pleased to support SB 318. SB 318 is an important step towards creating communities where young Oregonians are safe, informed, and supported in developing healthy relationships.

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. If every survivor stood hand-in-hand (4 feet across), the line of survivors would extend approximately 154 miles—extending from Portland, through Salem and Eugene, and reaching almost all the way to Roseburg.

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.

Thankfully, there is hope. Children who are sexually abused are able to live full, healthy, joyful lives. At OAASIS, we know that people can heal from the trauma of child sexual abuse. This knowledge is based

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>

on scientific evidence related to trauma and resiliency, as well as the lived experiences of many survivors involved in our work.

Last year, we began an expansive, multi-year project to conduct in-depth interviews with 50 adult survivors of child sexual abuse. One of our project goals is to identify ways to support children who are being sexually abused become safe and tap into their resiliency. We have already found a theme in our interviews: when a child who is being sexually abused has an adult—who is truly safe and trustworthy—see their value, the child can see their value. It is literally life-changing to have an adult demonstrate a framework for life that is different than the harm, confusion, and trauma that too often engulfs children at home. For many children, the adult who exemplifies a healthier, safer way of life is a teacher or another trusted adult at school.

SB 318 strengthens state-level violence prevention efforts in K-12 and improves community college response to interpersonal violence. In turn, more trustworthy adults are better able to support students to identify and develop healthy relationships, and more young Oregonians are able to live full, healthy, joyful lives.

SB 318 will help us raise a generation of Oregonians who are safe and empowered to have healthy relationships. We hope you'll join us in supporting SB 318. Thank you for your time and consideration.