



Testimony in support of SB 1540 A
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Submitted by Kerry Naughton, Executive Director
February 20, 2018

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chairs Olson and Sanchez, 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; all relationships are based on equity and respect; and all people who have been harmed are supported on their healing journeys.

We are pleased to support the clarified definition of child abuse for purposes of mandatory reporting found in SB 1540 A. This important legislation provides adolescent Oregonians who are engaged in consensual sexual activity the ability to reach out to school officials and teachers without fear of being reported to authorities. This legislation provides important boundaries to ensure that abusive sexual contact would still be reported.

OAASIS believes that healthy relationships are rooted in respect and consent. Unfortunately, respectful, consensual relationships are not what many young people see in the entertainment media and our culture’s overarching portrayals of relationships. Families and communities deserve greater support to help young people understand consent and develop healthy relationships. In some parts of Oregon, the interpretation of the current mandatory reporting law instructs school officials and teachers to report consensual sexual activity. This is making it less likely that young Oregonians will reach out to trusted adults when they’re needed. The modified definition of child abuse for purposes of mandatory reporting found in SB 1540 A provides an important fix, opening the door so more Oregonians can safely engage in healthy relationships.

We hope you’ll join us in supporting the modified definition of child abuse for purposes of mandatory reporting found in SB 1540 A. Thank you for your time and consideration.