



February 6, 2018

SB 1540- Written Testimony

Chair Gelsler and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 1540. I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers. There are 24 independent centers located across the state.

It is the Network's mission to provide a collaborative network of child abuse intervention centers working together to ensure quality, comprehensive services to provide Oregon's children the best possible opportunity to grow up healthy and safe. The Network is an Accredited State Chapter of the National Children's Alliance and partners with local, regional, and national partners on issues that impact our response to child abuse victims in Oregon.

I am writing today to express the Network's support of the -1 amendments to SB 1540. The amendments provide an important fix from 2017's SB 101, and clarify that DHS and law enforcement officers have the authority to investigate reports of child abuse in a private area of the school. This is important for the privacy of the child, and furthermore, this amendment is crucial as it requires schools to comply with officers and caseworkers who are trying to protect vulnerable children.

In consideration of the -2 amendments and the mission of the Network, at this time across the state our centers are serving an increasing number – in the thousands – of children who have been sexually assaulted by other children and teens as well as adults. The Oregon Network believes that this is one of those public policy issues in which we should slow down, come to the table and ask about unintended consequences of reducing the age to 12. That would be best considered in a longer session, not in a short session, and we respectfully recommend not accepting that amendment at this current time until the consequences – intended or unintended – can be discussed more thoroughly by all those who have an interest in our children and youth being safe, healthy and successful.

The Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers urges the adoption of the -1 amendment, but asks that more time is allowed to fully consider the potential consequences of the -2. amendments. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patty Terzian
Executive Director
Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers