



Support SB 1540A

Necessary Guidance on Mandatory Reporting

SB 1540A will provide much-needed guidance to all Oregon’s mandatory reporters, including physicians, nurses, educators, social workers, and legislators.

The health, safety and wellbeing of vulnerable Oregonians is paramount, and mandatory reporters should always err on the side of caution if there is any concern that a person is at risk of abuse. **We support SB 1540A because it acknowledges the need to report abuse of certain populations, while providing necessary clarification to create an environment where youth and vulnerable adults can confide sensitive information with a trusted adult.**

SB 1540A provides guidance on mandatory reporting of child abuse to law enforcement and the state, and clarifies standards for abuse reporting for adults with mental health or developmental disabilities:

- 1) SB 1540A is needed because some school districts recently received guidance to report **all** sexual contact broadly defined under the age of 18, including consensual contact, as child abuse to law enforcement or the State. **SB 1540A clarifies the circumstances when consensual sexual contact is not abuse, aligning with the Oregon Health Authority’s mandatory reporting guidelines of over 20 years.** It codifies commonsense standards that instances of consensual behavior — where there is no suspected abuse between middle and high school students within 3 years of age — do not need to be reported as “abuse.” **Nothing in the bill prohibits reporters from reporting any behavior they think is abusive.**
- 2) SB 1540A also makes necessary updates to Oregon’s reporting laws to protect adults with severe and persistent mental illness or developmental disabilities. The bill updates current standards to incorporate the reality of new CCO service delivery models, and streamlines definitions so that county and state abuse investigation teams can take appropriate action to keep the most vulnerable individuals safe.

We urge your aye vote on SB 1540A.

*From the desk of
Sheri Malstrom
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Sheri Malstrom*