



LC 56: Fulfilling Past Promises to Oregon's Kids

Problem: Past legislatures have passed important laws aimed at preventing child abuse and serving abuse victims, but some of the programs those laws created lack sufficient funding. Furthermore, those programs were implemented without a full understanding of the prevalence of abuse in our state, due to an imprecise method of data collection.

Proposed Solutions: Legislative Concept 56 will --

1. **Increase funding to Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) by \$3 million per year.**
Karly's Law (2007's HB 3328) mandated that children with suspicious injuries discovered during the course of an abuse investigation must receive medical treatment within 48 hours. CACs, the facilities charged with this work, strive to provide that treatment to as many victims as possible while also providing other important support services. Although these services are statutorily required, CACs only receive 17% of their funding through the state. As a result, many children are unable to access the full array of services they need. LC 56 will provide \$3 million per year in additional funding, allowing CACs to more holistically treat the kids and families who most need them. It will also reduce the regulatory burden on CACs seeking reimbursement through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Account, which in turn will help them serve more kids in need.
2. **Fund an additional FTE in the Department of Education to implement Erin's Law.**
Erin's Law (2015's SB 856) required the development and adoption of child sexual abuse prevention curriculum in all K-12 Oregon public schools. Since 2015, the Department of Education has only been able to dedicate 0.5 FTE to a "school sexual health specialist" position and 0.5 FTE to an operations and policy analyst who focuses on school sexual health. With 197 school districts statewide, many of which have faced barriers in finding and implementing sufficient abuse prevention curricula, there is simply too much work for two part-time positions to cover. The addition of 1.0 FTE to the school sexual health program will allow the Department to more meaningfully and effectively implement Erin's Law -- not only developing curricula, but also training teachers on how to provide child abuse prevention and sexuality education.
3. **Implement the Oregon Child Abuse Prevalence Study.**
Policy and funding decisions concerning child abuse are based on data collected by DHS Child Welfare. However, that data is based on the number of *reported* incidents of abuse. Experts agree that this method of data collection drastically underestimates the prevalence of child abuse in our state. The Oregon Child Abuse Prevalence Study is a successfully piloted new strategy for more accurately determining rates of child abuse and neglect by directly surveying students in schools statewide. With more accurate data, the legislature will be better equipped to address abuse through future policies, and to assess whether its investments in this area are having their intended impact. *This is a one-time request for \$700,000 to conduct the study statewide.*