



**Testimony in support of HB 2631  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Submitted by Kerry Naughton, Executive Director  
Feb 14, 2019**

Chair Williamson, Co-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, 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 a statewide organization 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 HB 2631, which will improve Oregonians’ health and safety by helping women who are incarcerated successfully reintegrate into our communities.**

Women are the fastest growing prison population in the United States. For a majority of women who are incarcerated, the experiences that preceded their incarceration were filled with violence and trauma. A 2006 study found that 96% of juvenile female offenders in Oregon were sexually abused prior to entering prison; 76% of these young women were sexually or physically abused before they were 13 years old. Nationally, women in prison are twice as likely as women in the general population to report having been sexually or physically abused as children. This correlation is so common it’s often referred to as the “sexual abuse to prison pipeline.”

At OAASIS, we know that people can heal from the trauma of child sexual abuse. This knowledge is based on scientific evidence related to trauma and resiliency, as well as the lived experiences of many survivors involved in our work. A survivor’s healing process often develops over the course of a lifetime and is often facilitated by professional support.

But when survivors can’t access support, safety and healing can be far more difficult to achieve. Without support, survivors may try to numb the pain of sexual or physical abuse by self-medicating with drugs or alcohol. Addiction can lead to other crimes and, ultimately, incarceration. While in prison, women are isolated from their communities and supportive members of their families. The time when a woman transitions back into the community can be a vulnerable experience.

HB 2631 will provide incarcerated women needed support as they reintegrate back into our communities across Oregon. The civil legal services that will be provided through HB 2631 will help

provide formerly-incarcerated women safety, stability, and connection. These services can help formerly-incarcerated women continue their healing journeys and give them a better ability to thrive.

Every survivor deserves access to safety, support, and stability. We hope you'll join us in supporting HB 2631. Thank you for your time and consideration.