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The Honorable Representative Jennifer Williamson, Chair
House Judiciary Committee, Members

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2472

Dear Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Katherine Gotch and I am an Oregon Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Clinical Sex Offender (Sexual Offense) Therapist who specializes in the evaluation and treatment of individuals who have sexually abused or are at risk to abuse. I have worked in the field of sexual abuse prevention for 18 years and currently serve as the Public Policy Board Representative for the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), a Board Member and co-chair of the Policy Action Team for the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence (NPEIV), and the Policy Advisor for the Oregon ATSA Chapter. I am also one of the subject matter experts for the OHA – SOTB, as well as a certified Static-99R/STABLE & ACUTE-2007 trainer. I was the principle author of HB 3233, which created the Oregon Sex Offender Treatment Board, and have been a participant in the workgroups focused on improvements to HB 3233 that resulted in the passage of HB 2633 in 2017 and development of this current legislation. I was also the content expert and co-author for HB 2549 which developed a risk assessment based level system for individuals convicted of sexual crimes in Oregon.

When the concept for HB 3233 was first being developed, it was always the intent that the Sex Offender (Sexual Offense) Treatment Board (SOTB) would provide oversight and evidence-based standards of practice for *all* professionals providing sexual abuse specific treatment services in Oregon. It was also the original intent for sexual abuse specific treatment to be recognized as an area of specialization which required specific training and expertise in addition to traditional mental health licensure. Public safety is increased when evidence-based standards are consistently utilized and practitioners receive proper training and supervision.

HB 2472 strengthens the prior amendments to HB 3233 which were passed in 2017 (HB 2633) and moves Oregon into alignment with our goal of consistent oversight and evidence-based standards of practice for *all* sexual abuse specific treatment professionals. It closes loopholes which have allowed professionals without the proper expertise and training to provide treatment services to individuals convicted of sexual crimes by ensuring all professionals providing treatment services have the necessary training, expertise and oversight to facilitate consistent evidence-based practices for this specialized population. It additionally moves Oregon away from harmful labeling through the incorporation of first-person language by changing the terminology from “sex offender” to “sexual offense” within designations and titles.

It should be noted there are still two minor amendments to HB 2472-1 which are being requested, specifically:

- Page 4 line 21: “(d) Within not ~~less than three years nor~~ more than six years prior to application, have had a minimum of 2,000 hours of direct clinical contact with persons described in ORS 675.368, including:
- Page 4 line 26: “(e) Have a minimum of 60 hours of formal training applicable to sexual abuse specific treatment and evaluation, achieved within the ~~three~~ **six** years prior to application.

Consistent use of evidence-based practices that maximize the potential for offender rehabilitation and reformation enhance community safety and reduce recidivism risk. HB 2472 resolves the unintended loopholes and moves the profession forward through the establishment of consistent practice standards, ethical guidelines, and expectations for continuing education. This ensures clients receive the most current and effective sexual abuse specific treatment practices which reduce recidivism, facilitate rehabilitation, and keep communities safer.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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