



Oregon Network of
Child Abuse
Intervention
Centers

February 19, 2019

Chair Keny Guyer
Vice Chair Noble
Vice Chair Sanchez

Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing,

RE: House Bill 2994

Dear Chair Keny Guyer, Vice Chair Noble, and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers (CAICs) is a collaborative network of 21 centers dedicated to ensuring quality, comprehensive services for all of Oregon's children who have concerns of abuse and/or neglect. When abuse has been reported or is suspected, CAICs provide a safe place where children can receive medical exams, forensic interviews, trauma-informed therapy, family support, and prevention services—all from highly trained specialists who know what to look for, and the right questions to ask to ensure proper diagnosis, treatment, and that sound evidence is collected.

We're here today to offer our support of HB 2994. Given the prevalence of abuse and our expertise as members of multidisciplinary teams across Oregon, we often learn of instances of abuse reported at school, taking place at school, or involving school personnel or others in contact with children for reasons relating to school. We are in strong support of measures that will assure immediate and accurate reporting by school personnel to appropriate agencies, namely law enforcement and the Department of Human Services.

Any potential abuse that school employees are made aware of should be handled by those trained to keep children safe when these concerns arise. It is also important to our Centers that children are not re-traumatized by telling their stories many times to different entities, which can also run the risk of jeopardizing that child's chance at justice through successful prosecution. It is our hope that a designated employee as specified in HB 2994 will ensure this practice of reporting immediately to DHS and law enforcement is followed consistently, while also keeping current other mandatory reporter requirements the same to cast a wide net.

We also encourage schools to think of our Centers as resources, along with other critical members of multidisciplinary teams, when developing and vetting procedures to be followed as mentioned in Section 1b. Finally, we recognize that the response to child abuse is only as effective as our partnerships and teamwork as it relates to the wellbeing and healing of children involved. For that reason, we are excited for the prospect of trained, designated school employees being active members of local multidisciplinary child abuse teams across Oregon.

Sincerely,

Becky Jones
Executive Director