



KATHERINE GOTCH, MA, LPC

INTEGRATED CLINICAL &  
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, LLC

2920 SW DOLPH COURT

SUITE 4

PORTLAND, OR 97219

P: 503-206-5239

F: 503-206-6751

[ICCSNW@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ICCSNW@GMAIL.COM)

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The Honorable Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee, Members

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2472**

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, 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 is important to note that this legislation does not prohibit a licensed mental health professional from providing treatment services to patients or clients whom present with sexual issues or concerns. The prohibition is narrow and specific to those providing sexual abuse specific treatment - defined as the evaluation, assessment, and reformation of sexual offense issues - to individuals referred or mandated to sexual abuse specific treatment by governmental agencies (e.g., Board of Parole & Post Prison Supervision, community corrections agencies, Department of Human Services) or similar entities (e.g., university/college).

The requested change from “sex offender” to “sexual offense” additionally creates greater consistency reflective of the intent and language created in 2017 (HB 2633) by focusing on those who have sexually abused or are at risk to abuse rather than the narrow legal definition of “sex offender.” It additionally moves Oregon away from harmful labeling through the incorporation of first-person language within designations and titles.

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.

Katherine Gotch, MA, LPC, ATSAF  
Oregon Certified Clinical Sex Offender Therapist  
(503) 206-5239  
[iccsnw@gmail.com](mailto:iccsnw@gmail.com)