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Testimony of Arthur Towers
OTLA Political Director
In Support of SB 1522-A
Before the House Rules Committee
February 25, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the members of Oregon Trial Lawyers Association. Our members represent students and their families in matters regarding school sex abuse. Our members also fight to make sure the accused have due process. Our goal is to hold wrongdoers accountable and expose systems of oversight that fail to protect kids.

We support SB 1522-A. The core of SB 1522-A provides technical fixes to SB 155 (2019) to allow the Teachers Standards and Practices Committee to operationalize its investigatory powers in instances of alleged sexual abuse and to provide a seamless process between school districts and the TSPC.

The language included in Section 3(7)(B)(b) regarding access to investigatory material is important. As discussed during Senate floor debate on February 18, the bill is worded to preserve the privacy of individuals involved while at the same time allowing access to victims, the accused, and their representatives. Specifically, the language means that there is access to investigatory material when there is a validly issued subpoena or a request for production of documents validly issued in a lawsuit.

While this bill is not a complete solution to all of the issues in this area, we urge a YES vote in SB 1522.