

Opposition to SB 409

The Association of Christian Schools International ("ACSI") is a Christian nonprofit association providing support services to 24,000 Christian schools that educate 5.5 million children in over 100 countries. ACSI serves 2,000 Christian pre-schools, elementary, and secondary schools and 90 post-secondary institutions in the United States. ACSI represents the interest of 49 Christian schools in Oregon and submit this letter of opposition on their behalf and our own.

ACSI and its schools seek the best for each student's safety and well-being. While we applaud the underlying goal of ensuring state health and safety laws are followed, we believe SB 409 does far more damage than good and should be opposed.

Oregon law already has mechanisms to ensure private and public-school staff follow state guidance on claims of sexual misconduct. Specifically, with additional jurisdictional authority to investigate misconduct granted to the Oregon Department of Education by SB 155 (2019) gaps in existing laws were closed. Further, much of SB 409 appears to come under or duplicate existing mandatory reporting obligations and would not substantially add more protections but would substantially add more potential liability to private, religious schools and teachers.

This statute would create two systems of justice by discriminating against private, faith-based school staff not TSPC licensed by allowing lawsuits against such staff members but not against those who are licensed. There are better ways to protect students and their families without also targeting religious educational efforts. Please reject SB 409.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Association of Christian Schools International