



Testimony in support of HB 5014
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
Submitted by Kerry Naughton, Co-Director
April 5, 2021

Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair Sollman, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kerry Naughton and I am the Co-Director of Oregon Abuse Advocates & Survivors in Service (OAASIS). OAASIS is a statewide organization that empowers communities to prevent child sexual abuse and help survivors live full, healthy, joyful lives. Our base is comprised of thousands of Oregonians—people who were sexually abused as children, survivors’ family members and loved ones, and community members who care about the safety, health, and well-being of survivors of child sexual abuse. We are working towards a future where all people experience a loving childhood free of abuse and trauma, and all relationships are based on respect, consent, and equity.

We are pleased to support the lifesaving work of the Crime Victims and Survivors Services Division of the Department of Justice, particularly the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) and Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention Fund (CAMI). ODSVS and CAMI-funded programs are vital resources to achieve safe, healthy communities across Oregon and support survivors’ healing journeys.

At OAASIS, we know that people can heal from the trauma of child sexual abuse. This knowledge is based on scientific evidence related to trauma and resiliency, as well as the lived experiences of many survivors involved in our work. A survivor’s healing process often develops over the course of a lifetime and is often facilitated by professional support. For many people who were sexually abused as children, this support is found through Oregon’s domestic and sexual violence services programs and child advocacy centers.

For Oregonians who were sexually abused as children, the need for these holistic, trauma-informed services is great. National research indicates that 1 in 4 females and 1 in 6 males are sexually abused before age 18. Based on the most recent census, an estimated 813,899 Oregonians have been (or will be) sexually abused before age 18. If every survivor stood hand-in-hand (4 feet across), the line of survivors would extend approximately 154 miles—extending from Portland, through Salem and Eugene, and reaching almost all the way to Roseburg.

Most children who are sexually abused are harmed by someone they know and trust. The abuser could be a family member, friend, or trusted person in a position of power, like a teacher or coach. For many survivors of child sexual abuse, life is not safe enough and the abuse is not understood enough to disclose the abuse until the survivor is older. This is the experience of most of OAASIS’s members.

For these courageous adult survivors of child sexual abuse, Oregon's domestic and sexual violence services programs become a lifeline of safety and support. These community-based services help survivors find safety, stay safe, and rebuild their lives. Passing HB 5014 would allow community-based domestic and sexual violence services programs to grow greater capacity to serve survivors who are facing housing instability. Programs would be able to offer individualized assistance for survivors who may need to move to be safe, or who need help with landlord negotiations and housing searches, application processes, and tenant education.

Some children are able to disclose the abuse; these courageous survivors can access comprehensive support through Oregon's child advocacy centers. Child advocacy centers are designed to minimize the trauma of children who have been abused by providing wrap-around resources and interventions in a child-focused environment.

ODSVS and CAMI are important to support survivors' healing journeys and to prevent further violence in communities across Oregon. We hope you'll join us in supporting HB 5014. Thank you for your time and consideration.