



VOICES UNITED.
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

February 1, 2022

House Committee on Human Services
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 4111

Dear Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Ruiz, Vice-Chair Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is advancing equitable policymaking and whole-child advocacy statewide to ensure our children and youth have what they need, regardless of their race or where they live, to thrive by activating meaningful change for children and families. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First for Oregon. We collect, analyze, and elevate data and research that, alongside lived experience, drives conversations in support of Oregon's future. We partner alongside ~120 organizations through The Children's Agenda to uplift and advocate for community-driven, equity-centered policies and investments that will improve the lives of Oregon's children and families.

HB 4111: Fund the Oregon Child Abuse Prevalence Study (OCAPS) is part of the 2022 Children's Agenda and is supported by many of our partners. HB 4111 supports the expansion of OCAPS, a comprehensive study that directly asks youth about abuse and neglect they may have experienced, while also uplifting their voices and input in preventing child abuse.

According to OCO's KIDS COUNT data cards, 15.7 children per 1,000 were victims of abuse in 2019.¹ While data from 2020 and 2021 show a decline in rates of abuse, this is largely attributable to reduced instances of reports during the pandemic with the closure of schools and other institutions where abuse and neglect are often reported. In fact, there are findings suggesting that the economic and psychological tolls of the ongoing pandemic have exacerbated domestic violence and abuse prevalence.

This survey and youth voice project will be the first of its kind in the U.S. Not only will OCAPS help to produce a baseline for us to understand what youth are facing, but also creates a process that helps make youth feel validated and supported. Youths are the best source of their own experiences and have deep prevention insights that can guide Oregon leaders' decision-making.

¹ <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

The Children's Agenda

is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.



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We urge the support of HB 4111 to provide much-needed improvement in the child abuse data Oregon collects, which will help us ensure appropriate prevention and responsive services for children and empower kids throughout the state to talk about a challenging (and potentially lifesaving) topic that too often gets swept under the rug.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Ivy Major-McDowall, Policy and Advocacy Manager

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

View the 2022 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2022-childrens-agenda