

Testimony Submission for SB473

Relating to instruction on the prevention of sex trafficking of children; declaring an emergency

March 29, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Desiree Lepsey with the iSeeYou Initiative, LLC. I am submitting my testimony and support concerning the curriculum instruction on prevention of child sexual abuse and sex trafficking of children in Oregon schools.

I am a survivor of both child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation as a homeless teenager shortly after high school. I believe that putting words to the exploits of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation will empower the students being taught in the schools as well as the teachers and staff who are supporting these students.

I recall how difficult it was to articulate what I didn't understand as a child and teenager. Even when you inherently know something is wrong, it is not often a child/youth will use their voice to draw attention to a matter, especially if it is all they've known and don't want to jeopardize their home structure or sense of safety – even if it is not safe.

I believe that annually teaching this curriculum in the schools and building on the conversation around the subject matter in an age-appropriate context, will provide validation to what many children and youth know through experience, and give them the courage to open up and bring to light what is done in the dark.

I ask that you strongly consider the possibilities of the empowerment and freedom that awaits our children and teens with the passing of SB473.

Sincerely,

Desiree Lepsey

iSeeYou Initiative, LLC