

SB 473

Dear House Representatives,

The Sex Trafficking Prevention and Education Subcommittee of Multnomah County's Sex Trafficking Collaborative is made up of a cohort of Human Trafficking direct service providers to youth and adults, affiliated professionals, school-based prevention educators, and survivor leaders.

While we appreciate the efforts that have been made to take steps towards eradicating human trafficking in Oregon, this body has serious concerns about SB 473 in its current form. The subcommittee, including survivor leaders, works with human trafficking survivors on a daily basis. We wish to share several concerns about SB 473 that stem from our expertise and inside knowledge of the dynamics around human trafficking in Oregon and in schools.

Funding

Currently, there is a real possibility that two bills providing essential funding may not pass the Oregon Legislature this year, [The Oregon Sexual and Domestic Violence Services Fund](#) and the [Survivor Housing Funds](#), limiting our ability to continue to provide existing services to survivors of sex trafficking and school-based prevention education. Given this context, passing SB 473 as an unfunded mandate would put additional strain on community-based survivor programs as well as teachers and schools, who are already overwhelmed and overworked.

Unintended consequences: Students of color and those with disabilities are overrepresented in school discipline measures, and adults of color are overrepresented in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. We are concerned that mandating sex trafficking education without a plan to mitigate unintended consequences will result in sexual minorities, students of color, and socially isolated individuals being targeted for bullying, violence, and increased isolation. The bill is written with many specifics that cannot account for the different needs of various school districts and does not mandate follow-up lessons or include specific procedures/training for when a student discloses trafficking. The bill mentions specific activities such as role playing, but neither provides clear guidelines on the intended purpose of the activities nor instruction on how to prepare or debrief with students after these lessons.

Prevention: Prevention efforts aim to create protective factors in schools, homes, relationships, and communities by building on individual knowledge, cultural strengths and long term supports to decrease vulnerability. This bill uses very limiting terms, in particular "**curriculum**". This phrase will limit trafficking prevention efforts in ways that are not culturally responsive and effective. Prevention measures must address the root causes of violence, dispel myths and stereotypes, and battle misinformation. We ask that this bill requires meaningful collaboration with the community-based organizations who already have expertise in sex trafficking prevention to develop effective strategies.

Erin's Law overlap Passed in 2015, Erin's Law requires the development and adoption of child sexual abuse prevention programs for students in kindergarten through 12th grade in all Oregon public schools. Given the significant overlap in content between high-quality general child sexual abuse prevention programs and sex-trafficking prevention programs for students, this bill is redundant with Erin's Law and could burden districts already struggling to comply with that unfunded mandate, rather than enhance Erin's Law and important prevention programming. We urge the House Committee on Education to delay the passing of SB473 in consideration of the above concerns.

Sincerely,

Multnomah County Sex Trafficking Collaborative
Prevention and Public Awareness Subcommittee