

SB 1579 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services

Action Date: 02/14/24

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Gelser Blouin, Manning Jr, Prozanski, Robinson, Weber

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/7, 2/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure creates a special fund in the State Treasury for advocacy centers that support children who have been abused. It directs the legislature to provide enough funds to make sure that all the centers helping these children are fully funded. The measure requires the Department of Justice to establish a one-time grant program to provide additional funding to these centers. A task force will be set up to study the best practices for multidisciplinary teams and report to the legislature. The measure declares an emergency and is effective on passage.

Detailed Summary:

I. Definitions

- Defines **children’s advocacy center** as a facility to which a child from the community may be referred to receive a thorough child abuse assessment and which facilitates a coordinated, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary response to cases of child abuse.
- Defines **regional children’s advocacy center** as a facility operated by a children’s advocacy center selected by the Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention Program to provide training and complex case assistance.

II. Children’s Advocacy Center Fund

Establishes the Children’s Advocacy Center Fund in the State Treasury, which appropriates money to the Department of Justice to establish and maintain children’s advocacy centers and regional children’s advocacy centers. Requires that the Legislative Assembly shall appropriate sufficient moneys to the fund that are necessary to fully fund said program. Appropriates \$3,500,000 from the General Fund to this fund.

III. Children’s Advocacy Center One-Time Grants

Directs the Department of Justice to develop and administer a one-time grant program to expand access to services and supports provided by children’s advocacy centers and regional children’s advocacy centers and to increase the number of children served by said centers. Directs the Department of Justice to govern the program in rule and specifies program requirements. Requires the Department of Justice to distribute all grants by June 30, 2025. Establishes the Children’s Advocacy Center One-Time Grant Fund and permits the Department of Justice to use the fund to cover administrative costs associated with administering grant program. Appropriates \$27,000,000 from the General Fund for deposit in the Children’s Advocacy Center One-Time Grant Fund. Sunsets program on January 2, 2026.

IV. Task Force on County Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Teams

Establishes the Task Force on County Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Teams and specifies its membership. Directs task force to study best practices of child abuse multidisciplinary teams and related referral processes. Requires Task Force to report to the Oregon Legislature by December 3, 2024. Directs the Department of Justice to provide staff support to the task force. Appropriates an unspecified amount to the Department of Justice to administer

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the task force. Sunsets task force on January 2, 2026.

Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Children's advocacy center accreditation process and funding
- Needs of children who have survived trauma and abuse

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Directs the Oregon Department of Justice, in place of the Department of Human Services, to develop and administer a one-time grant program to expand access to services and supports provided by children's advocacy centers and regional children's advocacy centers as well as to increase the number of children served by said centers. Directs the Department of Justice, in place of the Department of Human Services, to govern the program in rule and specifies program requirements. Permits the Department of Justice, in place of the Department of Human Services, to use moneys in the fund to cover administrative costs associated with administering grant program. Requires the Department of Justice to award and distribute all of the grants by June 30, 2025. Adds members to the Task Force on County Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Teams. Requires the task force to also identify challenges for drug-endangered children and propose solutions. Requires the task force to report to the legislature by December 3, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

Children's advocacy centers are safe, child-friendly places where kids who have experienced abuse or trauma can go for help and support. These centers bring together professionals like counselors, doctors, and police officers to work together in one location. They provide services like counseling, medical exams, and legal help, all in a comforting and supportive environment. The goal of children's advocacy centers is to make sure that children who have been hurt or abused get the help they need while minimizing further trauma and helping them on their path to healing. Regional children's advocacy centers are similar to regular children's advocacy centers but serve a broader area or region, rather than just one local community. They provide specialized services and support to children who have experienced abuse or trauma across multiple counties or jurisdictions within a particular region. Regional centers often collaborate with local agencies, such as law enforcement, medical professionals, and social services, to ensure that children receive comprehensive care and support. By serving a larger geographic area, regional children's advocacy centers can reach more children in need and provide a coordinated response to child abuse cases. There are [24 currently active centers](#) which serve all 36 Oregon counties, and four more centers are developing. Overall, funding for children's advocacy centers in Oregon is typically a combination of public and private sources, with each center employing various strategies to sustain its operations and meet the needs of the children and families it serves. Children's advocacy centers in Oregon typically receive funding from various sources: state and federal grants, private donations, philanthropic organizations, insurance reimbursements, state and local government contracts, and volunteer support.