



February 7th, 2024

TO: House Committee on Judiciary
FROM: Our Children Oregon
RE: Support for HB 4123 Sexual Assault Task Force SANE Training

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice Chair Andersen, Vice Chair Wallan, 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—regardless of their race, identity, ability, or where they live—have what they need to thrive. We collect, analyze, and elevate data and research that, alongside lived experience, drives conversations in support of Oregon's future.

We strongly support HB 4123 to provide an ongoing, dedicated state funding source for the SANE Certification Commission (SCC).

Child sexual abuse is prevalent in every corner of our state. A recent report by The Ford Family Foundation's Protect Our Children program found that 33% of their 10,000+ participants across Oregon identified as survivors of child sexual abuse. Additionally, the Oregon Child Abuse Prevalence Study (OCAPS) revealed that 29% of high school students experienced at least one type of child sexual abuse, with 14% experiencing three or more types.¹

Children and youth who survive sexual abuse deserve accessible, trauma-informed medical care. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) are specially trained to provide this care, playing a crucial role in improving safety, justice, and healing for survivors across Oregon. The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner/Sexual Assault Examiner Certification Commission's (SCC) primary purpose is to ensure that registered nurses, advanced practice nurses, physicians, and physician assistants providing sexual assault medical forensic examinations in Oregon possess the necessary training and qualifications to deliver the best standards of medical forensic care to victims of sexual assault. They also provide additional technical assistance to existing SANE/SAE practitioners through resources like toolkits on best practices and a 24-hour technical assistance phone line

In addition, **supporting SANE programs is vital for mitigating the physical, emotional, and mental impacts of sexual assault on victims, especially children.** Child sexual abuse often correlates with other childhood traumas, such as physical assault and emotional neglect.

¹ https://www.protectourchildren.org/_files/ugd/5c388a_83b88e08b2954f098a3d0821b0ba654a.pdf

Oregon youth experiencing multiple types of sexual abuse are 2.1 times more likely to suffer persistent sadness or hopelessness.² SANEs' intersectional, trauma-informed approach ensures accessibility of services to all communities and identities, preventing further victim traumatization in forensic and justice processes.

In closing, we are asking you to support survivors of sexual assault and the SANE workforce that cares for them by passing HB 4123. The current number of certified SANEs in Oregon is critically low, and investment in the SCC will support outreach and training to recruit and certify new SANEs, while also supporting the existing workforce as they respond to the ongoing crisis of sexual assault in Oregon. **An investment in the SCC is an investment in healing and survivor-centered response services across our state.**

We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge your support of HB 4123.

Sincerely,

Alyson Larson, Policy and Advocacy Intern
Greer Klepacki, Policy and Advocacy Senior Coordinator
Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

² https://www.protectourchildren.org/_files/ugd/5c388a_83b88e08b2954f098a3d0821b0ba654a.pdf