

## **Opposition to HB 4059 –A DANGEROUS BILL that will Hurt Children**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Hi! I am Vitaly and I was born with Cerebral Palsy. Because of this I use a wheelchair. Because my birth parents could not afford to handle my care, I was adopted at about 6 years old.

Both of my adopted sisters had much harder times than I did. They both survived serious abuse, of all types, both **before and during** their time in foster care. One still has sibling(s) in the foster care system, and she worries about their safety every day.

Their lived experiences---shared in depth with our family---are the reason I am speaking out today AGAINST HB 4059 and begging you to VOTE NO to its proposed drastic changes to Oregon’s Child Abuse Protection policies.

HB4059 harms children by trying to “define” away the traumatic real-life damage caused by abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Worse than that, its supporters seem **only** worried about saving \$\$\$, freeing investigators and caseworkers from doing their jobs, improving Oregon’s statistics in some kind of “keep up with the Jones” competition with other states, and making it easier for Founded Child Abuse Perpetrators and Sexual Registry Predators to escape consequences by preventing Records of their wrongdoing from being kept or expunging them after the damage has been done and adjudicated.

I agree with the Association of District Attorneys and the Sheriff’s Association that HB 4059 is a DANGEROUS Bill that “will” hurt children.

As a Partners in Policymaking student, I am raising my voice with Disability Rights Oregon to go even further:

HB 4059 will especially hurt children who have communication differences. There are many more such children and young adults like this than you can imagine.

As the son of an Adoptive Father who was one of the first users of speech generating assistive technology (Liberator/Pathfinder), I learned about Alternative and Augmentative Communication at an early age. Because of my sisters, I

learned first hand what it is like for children to learn English as their Second Language. As a college student at Portland Community College and Oregon State University, I studied American Sign Language and Deaf and Native American cultures, as well as awareness of the need for Interpretation and Translation services for diverse populations.

Such barriers----overlooked entirely by the authors of HB 4059----make it exceedingly more dangerous to the BIPOC community, immigrants, refugees, and YES!!! CHILDREN!!! Whose cries for Help are often NOT HEARD because of developmental, intellectual, mental health or emotional disabilities, incapacitating trauma, or just because the caseworker taking their Report of abuse is too busy, distracted, or apathetic to **Really Actively Listen**.

Adding insult to injury, HB 4059 is a TROJAN HORSE, a **Predator Protection Act**, that forbids Child Protective Service investigators from even daring to do their jobs.

Under HB 4059, NO person under the age of 18 will be allowed to be investigated for Child Abuse----no matter how severe the harm to the child----and no matter how certain the proof that they caused it.

Under HB 4059, NO ONE except for Adult Family Members, some People living in the Home, or specifically authorized Care-takers or Custodians would even be investigated at all.

YES!!! That means HB 4059 prevents holding Anyone Else accountability for Child Abuse causing even Severe Injuries or Death of child(ren) in the State of Oregon---NOT Strangers, NOT Neighbors, NOT Kidnappers, NOT Internet Predators, NOT Groomers, NOT Human Traffickers, NOT Fentanyl Sellers, NOT Child Pornographers, or Others the Public urgently needs to be WARNED ABOUT through Background Checks **before** children are irreparably harmed, **not after**.

Thank you for listening to Why My Vote is NO! on this terrible bill! Innocent children's lives –from newborns to young adults—NOW depend on Yours.

