



Oregon Network of
Child Abuse
Intervention
Centers

March 29, 2019

RE: House Bill 2657

Dear Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers (CAICs) is a collaborative network of 21 centers dedicated to ensuring quality, comprehensive services for all of Oregon's children who have concerns of abuse and/or neglect. When abuse has been reported or is suspected, CAICs provide a safe place where children can receive medical exams, forensic interviews, trauma-informed therapy, family support, and prevention services—all from highly trained specialists who know what to look for, and the right questions to ask to ensure proper diagnosis, treatment, and that sound evidence is collected.

We support HB 2657.

Unfortunately, many of the children and youth seen in our CAICs have witnessed or experienced domestic or sexual violence. 10% of the kids we saw in 2018 listed “witness to violence” as their primary concern for referral. We know that the impacts are devastating for children and often, when untreated, the trauma they experience can manifest in poor social and health outcomes.

The positive news is that prevention is possible. Supporting HB 2657, means supporting the work of community-based organizations that provide training and information about developing healthy relationships, teaching bystander intervention skills, changing social norms, and preventing sexual harassment, assault, and other forms of dating and interpersonal violence.

In the field of child abuse prevention, we often see parents who are trying very hard to keep their children safe, but who fall short merely because they did not have the opportunities to learn how from their own caregivers. Trauma and abuse can be generational. Ties within families are so important; and to prevent child abuse, all of us have a “role to play.” Part of that role is to offer opportunities for children and youth to learn how to grow up and enter adulthood healthy, safe, and healing. We believe prevention education is critical to this vision, and it's one way of giving youth tools for physical and emotional safety.

Sincerely,

Becky Jones
Executive Director
Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers