

**Kate Brown**  
Governor



**Oregon Commission for Women**  
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"  
421 SW Oak St., Portland, OR 97204  
O 503.302.9725  
Email: [oaco.mail@oregon.gov](mailto:oaco.mail@oregon.gov)  
Website: [www.oregon.gov/Women](http://www.oregon.gov/Women)

Senate Committee on Rules  
Testimony in support of SB155  
May 6, 2019, at 1pm, Hearing Room C

Chair Senate Majority Leader Burdick, Vice-Chair Senate Minority Leader Baertschiger Jr., Senators Boquist, Dembrow and Roblan,

The Oregon Commission for Women, in its role as advocate for the women of Oregon, strongly supports SB155, which requires all investigations involving suspected abuse or sexual conduct by school employees to be conducted by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission.

SB155 provides specific procedures and standards for handling allegations of abuse or sexual conduct regarding school employees, and provides clear definitions for all parties involved. Codifying such procedures into law is a critical step in ensuring that Oregon's students have a process to report abuse and unwanted sexual conduct at school.

All students in Oregon should have equal opportunity to succeed in their K-12 education. Currently, a disproportionate number of girls and members of LGBTQ community, especially those from communities of color, confront challenges that undermine their success in school each day. The most recent Healthy Teen Survey, administered by the Oregon Health Authority, reflects statistics on the high number of unwanted sexual comments or inappropriate attention reported by high school students.

According to the National Women's Law Center, there are major sexual conduct-related challenges to equal opportunity for all K-12 students:

- Both sexual harassment and sexual violence are prohibited in schools under federal law, yet many girls still experience harassment and assault, which can have a devastating impact on their lives.
- Too many girls are leaving school because of the lack of trauma-informed approaches to deal with sexual harassment, assault and bullying.

We, at the Oregon Commission for Women, believe in the right of all students to personal safety while they are attending school. SB155 sets a standard for defining and handling sexual conduct and abuse, and thereby ensures increased safety for Oregon's schoolchildren. We urge an AYE vote on SB155.

Dr. Barbara Spencer  
Chair

#### **OR Commission for Women**

**Chair:**

Dr. Barbara Spencer

**Vice Chair:**

Vacant

**Commissioners:**

Dr. Doris Cancel-Tirado  
Dr. Maura Kelly  
Kassandra Krifka  
Robin Morris Collin  
Dr. Adrienne Ochs  
Helen Richardson  
Julia Yoshimoto

**Legislative Members:**

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson  
Representative Sheri Schouten

**Staff:**

Lucy Baker, Administrator  
Nancy Kramer, Executive Asst.  
Dr. Connie Kim-Gervey,  
Research Analyst