



To: Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing

From: Jason Myers, Executive Director
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

Kevin Campbell, Executive Director
Oregon Association Chiefs of Police

Date: February 3, 2020

Re: Support for HB 4112 – Child Advocacy Center Funding

Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police and Oregon State Sheriffs' Association, please accept this testimony in support of HB 4112. Our associations represent law enforcement leaders throughout the State of Oregon. We understand the importance of a public safety system that prioritizes the needs of children who suffer victimization and need effective and appropriate care. We believe the \$3 million dollars of increased funding for this important program is necessary in order to meet rapidly growing needs. We support additional funding for the Child Advocacy Program (CAC) because:

- Involvement with a CAC increases successful prosecutions, which ensures justice—and helps protect additional and future victims
- Evidence gathered at a CAC helps avoid costly trials because when offenders are faced with the resounding evidence collected by a Center, they are more likely to take a plea deal and avoid a trial.
- Before CACs existed, detectives and law enforcement officers were often put in the position of interviewing children in the field without being a trained forensic interviewer. This is not ideal for the officer OR for the child
- Without CACs, children must tell their story to law enforcement, case workers, medical providers, and others in environments that are not typically child-friendly. This forces children to relive their trauma over and over again, which research has demonstrated can

have disastrous physical and mental health consequences over time. Moreover, when interviews are conducted by individuals who are not adequately trained as child forensic interviewers, it can lead to retraumatization, refusal to disclose, recantation, or incomplete information.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for your support of Child Advocacy Centers.