

Chair Bynum and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 2546. My name is Tyler Miller. I am the ongoing victim of a failed system. A system that was supposed to protect me. In December 2015, I was on a school sponsored Varsity Basketball Trip with Sprague High School to San Diego California to play in the Surf and Turf Tournament. My life, high school social experience and sports career drastically changed courses after I was targeted by teammates and friends for a grievous act of team hazing culminating in attempted sexual assault. 4 of my closest teammates pinned me down while 5 watched me struggle, and attempted to sodomize me with a hotel tv remote. I felt fear, abandonment, embarrassment, and intimidation.

Due to having earned the respect of the coaching staff and overwhelming feelings of intimidation, I opted to have my parents deal directly with my teammates parents vs involving my coach – a decision I have questioned myself on multiple times since. You see, my coach favored one of my assailants. Also, these assailants were my so-called friends. At that time, addressing it with the parents of my teammates seemed like the best course of action to protect me from future retaliation. The harassment did stop for the short-term. The next season, however, it started up again, with threats by the assailants that they were going to attack me again. At this point, we told the coach and the school.

What I want to share today is that almost equally traumatic as the assault has been what happened once the school and School District was involved. With ongoing threats the following season, a police and school investigation was initiated and it was determined in my Junior year pre-season that a school transfer was in my best interest (as well as of the best interest of my brother who was a freshman at the time)

But now I wonder – was it?

- ✓ I left my teachers and other classes mid-term
- ✓ I left my basketball team and coaches – there were good kids on that team too
- ✓ I was forced to find new friends at a new school with rumors traveling like crazy
- ✓ There was no opportunity at my new H.S to take part in leadership
- ✓ I assumed a commute over the West Salem Bridge to attend school
- ✓ I missed out on my entire Junior year of basketball leaving a void in my statistics and experience which I feel hindered my opportunity to play at the next level
- ✓ I watched from the sidelines as the kids that sexually assaulted and harassed me got to play out their season

And then my senior year arrived. I could finally play.

There was so much anxiety I felt not having answers in regards to my safety, procedures, and findings during the 4 months Salem Keizer conducted their investigation. My parents will touch on the vague email we received in conclusion.. Even to this day, four years later, I still do not have closure as the Department of Education is still sifting through the appeal.

I ultimately had to play against my assailants in front of a crowd of people where I was verbally harassed during the game by a drunk parent of one of my assailants. There were the looks, the questions from new friends and teachers and teachers showing doubt that I was truthful in my story since the kids that did this to me never missed practices or games and went on to win awards during after the school

district conducted their investigation. There was the continued harassment and hazing I experienced. The school district allowed this to happen to me despite all I had been through.

With the passing of this bill and a cause of action for an injunctive relief, victims like myself would have a path to get answers, protection, and peace of mind, a path of empowerment that I would have given anything for, and still would. Victims need a path, they need resolution and they need closure... something I still do not have today – four years later.

Thank you for time, and I ask you for your support of HB 2546, in order to support other survivors and prevent what happened to me from happening to them.