

I support SB 409. The sad truth is we need this bill to hold school employees accountable. They need to know specifically what it could cost them if they fail. By leaving it open for courts to decide makes it more difficult for courts, defendants, and prosecutors. This is an expansion of what is already in place, it isn't changing anything except spelling out what the cost is for those that fail to report. As long as everyone follows the laws, then there is nothing to worry about. This is only for those that don't. Mandatory reporters need to realize that their failure to report can impair a child's future mental and physical health. Oregon needs to model how to speak out on behalf of its most vulnerable population. Training is already required, but this is just part of what needs to happen. As I found out the hard way, there is no real recourse when school employees fail to report to the authorities. My daughter was assaulted by a student at her school. We were both lost and didn't know where to turn. She was scared to go to the police and the school was where she felt she would find support and guidance. We were wrong. She was not given guidance, nor did they file a report with the authorities, they turned their back and did nothing. Schools are a place students should feel support and taught what to do. With the school not guiding her or filing a report, she became severely depressed and suicidal. More than what she was dealing with in the assault. I wouldn't leave her alone and had her friends make sure they were always with her. This only happened after the school turned its back. She felt she had nowhere to go. If only they filed the report with the authorities it would have changed so much. It was new for me as well, and I too was scared. Ultimately we filed the report ourselves and figured out the course. It is extremely frustrating that we went to the school that had the training, yet refused to help. I don't care if school employees are only following the law to protect themselves, whatever it takes to ultimately help the victims. SB 155 is only a start. Helping victims isn't a one bill fits all, this will be an evolving marathon to always strive to do better. How can you say a victim is overprotected and it can be a burden to follow the law? Mandatory reporters are front-line disrupters to help their students and should be held accountable if they fail. This isn't making anyone do more work, it is only showing them what happens when they don't do the work they are already required to do.