



To: Chair Prozanski
Vice-Chair Thatcher
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and 110 Measure Implementation

From: Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

RE: SB 274: Protections for Sex Trafficked Minors

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV) was founded in 1978. There is a domestic and/or sexual violence Coalition in every State and US Territory. Currently our membership includes 51 community based non-profit domestic and sexual violence organizations as well as tribal nations domestic and sexual violence service programs. OCADSV provides support and training across the state.

OCADSV is committed to ending further traumatization in favor of a more supportive and comprehensive approach for minor victims of sex trafficking.

These minors are victims of crime. Even if the intention is to “protect them,” the impact of prosecuting a minor too often leads to further traumatization and additional harm. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have historically borne the brunt of systemic inequities in both our criminal justice and social service systems; they are also disproportionately at risk for victimization of sex crimes.

It is not logical to punish a person, who by legal definition is a victim. It also unintentionally helps the traffickers, who tell minors that there is no help for them because they are committing a crime. A trauma-informed and culturally-responsive approach is to work in partnership with these victims. We need to let minors who have been trafficked know that they can come forward and will not be punished.

We know that law enforcement wants to end the trafficking of minors. We see and hear from victims and service providers that a way to do this is by building trust with members of law enforcement. This trust is undermined when youth victims are prosecuted for harm that was committed against them.

Other service systems, such as the sexual and domestic violence system, have seen that providing community-based advocacy and support services can increase a victim’s willingness to work with law enforcement. We can show minor victims of sex trafficking that we are here to support them and work alongside them.

Thank you for considering SB 274 and shining light on this crucially important topic.