



## Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force



### **Testimony in support of HB2828 House Committee on Education February 8, 2021**

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the House Committee on Education:

The Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF) is pleased to submit testimony in support of HB2828.

Our mission is to advance a multi-disciplinary, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to violence and abuse in Oregon. Our goal is to prevent violence from happening in the first place, while simultaneously improving our response efforts to mitigate trauma and ensure the safety and security of all victims.

SATF has invested significant time and resources to support Erin's Law implementation throughout the state, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and community-based organizations in local communities throughout Oregon. Since its passage in 2015, ODE has been a leader in this work, with limited capacity and investment from the Oregon Community Foundation. Since the passage of Erin's Law:

- ODE facilitated an intensive overhaul of the health education standards in 2016 incorporating these requirements with input from prevention experts across the state.
- Oregon has made an intentional effort to implement prevention programming across the Social Determinants of Health and utilizing a shared risk and protective factor framework. This means that we are trying to get to the root causes of violence, abuse, and other social issues. To better do that, ODE, in partnership with stakeholders across Oregon have worked to align Erin's Law (2015) with requirements in the Healthy Teen Relationships Act (2013), and Oregon's Comprehensive Sexuality Education law (2009).
- To better support educators across the state implement Erin's Law and these other bills - ODE has launched their health educator online resource platform, Statewide Sex Ed Steering Committee (which SATF sits on) who develop resources and guides the work the state does on Erin's Law, etc., and in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Human Services, they've launched the Oregon Teacher Training Institute (OTTI) to provide further training to educators across the state.
- Further, ODE in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority along with several statewide and community based partners (including SATF) has been conducting an extensive research project around the implementation of these three education laws in the state which has culminated in a mapping project. This map is informed by school districts across the state as well as the Oregon Student Health Survey - which beginning in 2020 added an elementary school survey.

- Additionally, ODE has created many guidance documents for schools and community partners including their Erin's Law Tipsheets and recently the implementing Erin's Law toolkit in response to the global pandemic.
- Finally, ODE recently launched an open-source learning project for experts in the state to develop lessons for grades K-5 and 9-12 on violence and abuse prevention and health promotion to address gaps identified in existing national and local curricula. These experts will develop these lessons over the next several months with the support and guidance of ODE and content experts and launch their free, open-source lessons in time for the 2021-2022 school year.

This work has only been possible because of a local foundation's limited investment in the Department of Education, and is not permanent. That investment has allowed ODE to lead the way on ensuring Erin's Law is implemented effectively and thoughtfully throughout Oregon thus far. However, school districts and communities need much more support. Many educators and practitioners throughout Oregon are still unaware of all this work. This is in large part due to limited capacity at ODE. Additionally, many partners including local child advocacy centers and domestic violence organizations who often partner with schools to meet the requirements of Erin's Law aren't consistently aware of this established infrastructure.

After the local investment ends this year, ODE will return to only having .5 FTE dedicated for supporting all districts in their child abuse prevention efforts. This is not enough. SATF has long been an advocate of increasing the capacity at ODE for a number of years; we believe that this investment will increase capacity to implement Erin's Law and meaningfully reduce rates of sexual violence and abuse. By including this provision in Erin's Law, more partners and educators throughout the state will clearly be directed to the robust work ODE has already provided to help the state meet Erin's Law.

This provision and supporting capacity at ODE will help Oregon actually get closer to realizing real child sex abuse prevention and a safer and healthier Oregon for all people. For all of these reasons and many more, I urge you to support HB 2828.

Respectfully,

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