

Allow the community to electronically report child abuse

Why it matters

Ensuring **child safety is one of our most crucial responsibilities**. The Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) is an important tool in fulfilling this responsibility, and we need to make sure it stays up-to-date and works as effectively and efficiently as possible.



Background

ORCAH launched in April 2019 and was initially a telephone-only reporting system. ORCAH has matured since its launch and ODHS is now seeking to add an electronic reporting option – a move that is being made in a growing number of states. Mandatory reporters in Oregon have repeatedly requested the option to report in this manner, with teachers among the most vocal groups, as they may need to make reports during class time and require a faster and more discreet method of reporting than a telephone call.

Risk

Existing Oregon law accounts for a telephone hotline but does not clearly recognize an electronic reporting option. The law could be interpreted to mean that a mandatory reporter has not fulfilled requirements under the law in cases where they submit an electronic report without a corresponding telephone call to the hotline.

In addition, future improvements in reporting technology may be difficult to adopt or implement under a law that only considers a telephone reporting option.

Solution

Senate Bill 231 would modify ORS 419B.015 to explicitly allow the receipt by ORCAH of electronic reports from mandatory reporters and make future technological advancements easier to incorporate into Oregon's child abuse reporting system.

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