SB 231   STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Prepared By:	Matthew Perreault, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates:	4/17

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop and maintain a centralized child abuse reporting system that includes an abuse reporting telephone hotline and a website for submitting reports electronically. Modifies processes for reporting of child abuse to include reporting via the centralized child abuse reporting system. Removes ability to report abuse to local DHS office or designee of DHS. Applies to reports of child abuse made following effective date.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

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SENATE VOTE: Ayes, 24; Nays, 3; Excused, 3

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon law obligates certain individuals such as doctors, teachers, government employees, elected officials, social workers, and caregivers, who have close contact with potentially vulnerable populations, including children (ORS 419B.010), elders (ORS 124.060), patients in long term care (ORS 441.640), and adults with mental illness or developmental disabilities (ORS 430.765), to report instances of abuse of those populations to law enforcement and the Department of Human Services (DHS). These reports are recorded and investigated by DHS, which may also pursue criminal charges.

Currently, the law requires an oral report by telephone or otherwise to the local DHS office, a designee of DHS, or a law enforcement agency within the county where the person making the report is located at the time of the contact (ORS 419B.015). The Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH), launched in April 2019, is intended to centralize and simplify the process of making such reports. ORCAH is a telephone-only reporting system and does not allow for electronic reporting of child abuse.

Senate Bill 231 establishes a centralized child abuse reporting system which will be used to report child abuse via hotline orally or via website electronically.