

YES ON HB 2479

Common sense protections
for Children's Advocacy
Centers

Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) provide statutorily mandated services for children when child abuse is suspected. 24 CACs across the state work with Multidisciplinary Teams to provide child abuse medical exams, forensic interviews, therapy and family support services to children in every county. Children's Advocacy Centers offer these statutorily mandated services free of charge to families.

HB 2479 offers limited, common sense protections to CACs that are following national best practices.

CACs provide stability and professionalism during highly stressful and emotional child abuse situations. Recognizing this, 19 other states offer liability protections to Children's Advocacy Centers. Every other partner on Oregon's MDT enjoys liability protections. Children's Advocacy Centers in Oregon currently do not have any liability protections.



Liability Protection

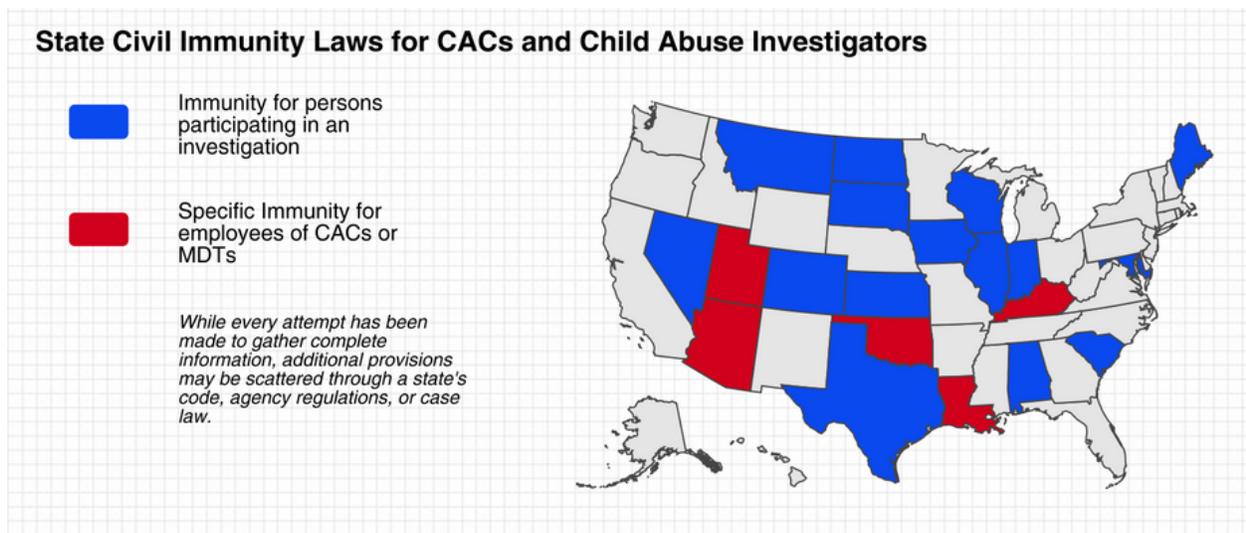
- ✓  Law Enforcement
- ✓  Oregon Department of Human Services
- ✓  School Officials
- ✓  District Attorneys
- ✓  Court Appointed Special Advocates
- ✗  Children's Advocacy Centers



Immunity from prosecution and civil liability is an important issue for professionals involved in the response to allegations of child abuse and neglect. The fear of potential litigation can, in some cases, hinder an investigator's ability to make difficult decisions surrounding a case.... states should work to strengthen these protections expressly providing immunity to employees of Children's Advocacy Centers and Multidisciplinary teams
- National Children's Alliance



Lawsuits against CACs in Oregon have already created access issues and thousands of dollars have been spent on legal counsel. An Oregon CAC was closed for a period of time following a frivolous lawsuit filed by an alleged child abuser, who sued a forensic interviewer for their testimony in the courtroom. Being a small-sized agency, the lawsuit had significant impacts on the CAC resulting in a lack of access for other children facing child abuse in that community. HB 2479 offers common sense protection against frivolous lawsuits, for CACs following best practices set forth by the National Children's Alliance.



Support Oregon children by better protecting CAC professionals so that when abuse occurs, those responsible lose their access to cause further harm and trauma.

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