



# Oregon Child Abuse Solutions

Protect. Heal. Lead.

April 7, 2023

## Joint Committee on Ways and Means Support of HB 2732 and DOJ POP 309

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

On behalf of Oregon Child Abuse Solutions, we are pleased to submit testimony in support of HB 2732 and DOJ POP 309.

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (OCAS) is the statewide chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers and our mission is to transform Oregon's child abuse response by strengthening CACs, training first responders, supporting MDTs, and leading statewide initiatives to ensure that all children receive quality, healing-centered care.

We urge you to **support HB 2732, which includes \$6M in vital funding for the 24 Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) across the state.** CACs provide critical and unique services including medical exams and forensic interviews when there is a question of child abuse. No other nonprofit fills this role other than Children's Advocacy Centers and they ensure that a comprehensive and coordinated response occurs for every child no matter their zip code.

Many community partners across Oregon are short-staffed and struggling to keep up with the demands of their core functions. CACs are mission-critical in assisting partners like DHS/Child Welfare and law enforcement to make the best decisions they can with child safety decisions and criminal investigations.

We are working on updating our numbers post-2021 funding and post-COVID, but only about 55% of kids referred to Children's Advocacy Centers were seen, largely due to a lack of available staff. When kids can't be seen at a Center, DHS has to make a placement decision without all of the necessary information and/or a child may be seen by someone who is not specialized, or in a non-trauma-informed environment like a police station or emergency room.

Children's Advocacy Centers have been working with the Legislature to increase state funding, and we are really thankful that our \$6M funding ask was included in the Christmas tree bill in 2021. However, the Christmas Tree bill is just one-time funding, and CACs need this continued support to ensure staffing levels are held and adequate to meet the growing needs of communities across Oregon.

We want to hold the progress the Legislature made to protect kids served by Children's Advocacy Centers, and keep much-needed new staff in place. This is why we are

4300 NE Fremont St, Suite 220  
Portland, OR 97213  
[www.oregoncas.org](http://www.oregoncas.org)

respectfully requesting \$6M during the 2023 Legislative Session. HB 2732, which is in WMS contains this funding, and DOJ also put forward POP 309 which contains that same request.

Sincerely,

*Shelly*

Shelly Smith  
Executive Director