

## **SB 473 Testimony**

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Hudson, Wright and members of the committee, thank you for hearing this bill, and all your work on behalf of the citizens of Oregon.

My name is Masayo Halpin. I am a retired Special Agent with the FBI. I served 20 years in the Portland Field Office. For six of those years I was the Crimes Against Children Coordinator and I created a FBI Task Force to combat the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Currently, I am the Training Specialist for In Our Backyard, a local nonprofit in Central Oregon, that fights Human Trafficking nationwide. I implement our Teens Against Trafficking curriculum where I speak to middle and high school students and educate them about trafficking to prevent them and their friend from being trafficked. This curriculum has been adopted by school districts throughout Oregon and has been very appreciated by teachers and school counselors. In Our Backyard currently has an Education Professional creating age-appropriate curriculum for grades K-5.

As long as our youth have vulnerabilities (which they all do), traffickers will be ready to exploit them.

Sex trafficking of our children is a bigger problem than most people know. But it can be prevented. Education is the best and only prevention. With the passing of this bill, we can educate

the youth, the parents and the teachers. Through age-appropriate curriculum we can equip our children with the tools to identify a trafficker, recognize they are being groomed and empower them with the ability to notify a trusted adult.

With organizations like IN OUR BACKYARD and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children response teams in counties all over Oregon, all Oregon schools have access to free training and curriculums. We cannot fail our children. I urge you to vote for this bill.

Thank you for your time.