



Representative Bobby Levy

Serving Umatilla, Union & Wallowa Counties



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Greetings Chair Neron, Vice Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Wright, members of the committee,-

For the record, my name is Bobby Levy, state representative for House District 58. Today I am here to solemnly express my support for Senate Bill 473 to protect Oregon's children from child sex trafficking.-

Last fall, KTVZ reported that Bend Police conducted a 4-month long sting against child sex trafficking that implicated over 200 people. While many of the people solicited for the sting ended contact when they learned they were speaking with a minor, none of them contacted police to alert law enforcement about potential child trafficking. 28 people were ultimately arrested for child sex crimes. -

Bend is just a snapshot of a wider problem in Oregon. Data released by the US Department of Justice in 2013 about the preceding 4 years reports nearly 500 children were trafficked for sex in Portland. The average victim age was 15, while the youngest was 8, with 96% of victims identified as female, 3% as male, and 1% as transgender. 41% were Caucasian, 27% were African American, and 5% were Hispanic. 17% of these victims have had a baby.-

Oregon has done a lot of work to protect children from sex trafficking. As highlighted by the US Commission on Civil Rights, all child welfare staff in the country must train to identify sex trafficking, as well as screen children who are missing or display signs of trafficking. In Oregon, DHS facilitates this training through the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Coordinator. By 2018, Oregon was one of only three states to implement mandatory training.-

Oregon still has a gap when it comes to protecting our children, and that is our children themselves. While the topic of child sex trafficking is unsettling and deeply disturbing even to adults, the age range of children who have been trafficked in our states necessitates inclusion in our schools. SB 473 directs school districts to adopt prevention curriculum that addresses child sex trafficking. This curriculum will cover children from kindergarten through senior year. The curriculum will include techniques for how to escape and report sexual abuse or a child sex trafficking situation.-

I urge the committee to take back our children from the thugs who are trafficking them for profit. This legislation will empower Oregon's youth to recognize this very real danger and fight back when they are targeted. Our colleagues in the Senate unanimously approved this legislation, and it is up to this Committee to rise to the occasion and follow their lead.-

Best,

Rep. Bobby Levy, HD 58

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