

Submitter: Devon Lawson-McCourt  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure: SB1579

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Committee On Human Services,

As a survivor of child abuse and a staunch advocate for a society that champions the rights and well-being of every individual, especially the most vulnerable among us, I am writing to express my unwavering support for SB 1579. This Act is not merely a piece of legislation; it is a beacon of hope for countless children who, like myself, have endured the unspeakable horrors of abuse. It represents a commitment to not only acknowledge but actively address the deep-seated issues that perpetuate child abuse within our society.

The creation of the Children's Advocacy Center Fund through SB 1579 is a testament to the power of collective action and the role of government in safeguarding the rights of its citizens. By ensuring the Legislative Assembly appropriates sufficient moneys to fully fund the existing grant program, this Act lays the foundation for a robust support system that is accessible to all children, regardless of their socio-economic background. This is a reflection of a socialist principle that I hold dear: the idea that it is our collective responsibility to support and uplift each other, especially those who are unable to defend themselves.

Moreover, the directive for the Department of Human Services to develop and administer a one-time grant program to expand access to services and supports provided by children's advocacy centers and regional children's advocacy centers is a critical step forward. It addresses the urgent need for comprehensive support services that are tailored to the unique needs of child abuse survivors. As someone who has navigated the daunting path of recovery, I can attest to the transformative impact of having access to compassionate and specialized care.

The establishment of the Task Force on County Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Teams is another commendable aspect of SB 1579. By auditing Oregon's compliance with Karly's Law and studying the barriers to access for child abuse multidisciplinary teams and children's advocacy centers, this task force will play a crucial role in ensuring that our systems are not only effective but also equitable. It acknowledges the ongoing challenges we face in combating child abuse and underscores the importance of continual evaluation and adaptation of our strategies.

The emergency declaration, effective upon passage, highlights the urgency of this issue and the immediate action required to protect our children. It is a bold statement that child abuse is not a secondary concern but a pressing issue that demands our

full attention and resources.

In conclusion, SB 1579 embodies the principles of social justice, equity, and compassion. It is a comprehensive approach to addressing child abuse that recognizes the importance of funding, access, and evaluation. As a survivor, I see this Act as a critical step towards healing, not just for individuals but for our community as a whole. I urge you to support SB 1579 and to stand with the countless children who deserve a future free from abuse. Together, we can build a society that truly values and protects its most vulnerable members.

Sincerely,  
Devon Lawson-McCourt