

February 12, 2024

Dear Chair Reynolds and the Members of the House Early Childhood and Human Services:

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Alliance, a dedicated champion and established voice in advocating for the safety, health, and well-being of children, youth, families, and communities across Oregon. Our association has reviewed House Bill 4086 –2 amendment, and we wish to express our support for this legislation to study the scope of child abuse investigations by the Department of Human Services and to better understand how best to support children who are exhibiting problematic sexual behavior and their families.

This bill supports the deliberate and thoughtful consideration of a regulatory system that works better children, youth and those supporting them every day. Our existing system should and must focus on continuous quality improvement. Instead, our current investigatory structure has resulted in a culture of fear which increases turnover. For children and youth to thrive, they must have consistent and established relationships.

All of our work must be done through the lens of national best practices that are trauma informed. We applaud the use of a skilled facilitator who specializes in public policy who can work with stakeholders to make recommendations on how best to operationalize child abuse in Oregon and work with children exhibiting problematic sexual behavior and their families

House Bill 4086 -2 will pull together a committee of experts including those with lived experience to recommend:

- jurisdiction of ODHS on child abuse investigations,
- definition of child abuse
- best practices for conducting an abuse investigation
- oversight of the recommendations that come from this work

Furthermore, the study will identify the current services and supports available to children who are exhibiting problematic sexual including any gaps. From this work and through the use of a committee of experts, the study will make recommendations regarding the services and treatment for these children and identify the supports needed by the family. The recommended treatment interventions and support for both the child and family must be family centered, community-based and use national best practices that are trauma informed. Only then, we are able to have a meaningful impact on how best to prevent out-of-home placement or incarceration.

Thank you for considering our perspective on House Bill 4086 -2 amendment. We appreciate your dedication to the welfare of vulnerable individuals and look forward to the opportunity to discuss our concerns further.

Sincerely,

Royce Bowlin

CEO