To: Chair Gelser Blouin
Vice Chair Linthicum
and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Shelly Smith, Executive Director
Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (OCAS)

Date: January 21, 2025

RE: SB 138 – Support

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Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (OCAS) is the statewide network of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs), the entities that perform forensic interviews, medical exams, family advocacy and offer other services to children and families when child abuse is suspected. There are 24 Children's Advocacy Centers spread across the state that offer these services to children in every county, working in partnership with community partners like law enforcement, schools, DHS caseworkers, prosecutors, and others.

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions continues to support the creation of an electronic reporting mechanism for reports of child abuse, and we believe this tool should be widely available and not just limited to mandatory reporters. Our members believe that an electronic reporting option will be helpful for people who are making reports, especially reporters who may be in a position where they cannot immediately step away to make a discrete phone call. As well, allowing for electronic reports could allow those making a report to have an electronic record of the report made.

OCAS understands that various challenges have led to SB 231 (2023) not being fully implemented yet, and that language changes are necessary so that the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) will be compliant with statute. We also understand that the creation of a statewide online reporting system is a significant undertaking, and we support ODHS taking the time needed to deliver a high-quality product. Simultaneously, we hope that ODHS continues to work on this project with a sense of urgency, and provides at least annual reports on their progress. The creation of an electronic reporting system is one way to remove barriers to reporting child abuse, and we should all work together to ensure that child abuse is reported and acted upon.