

Submitter: Ann Samuelson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB710

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 710

Presented to the 83rd Oregon Legislative Assembly, 2025 Regular Session

By Ann Samuelson

Maternal Grandmother and Advocate for Child Safety

Chairperson and members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am here today in strong support of Senate Bill 710, a bill that calls for mandatory domestic and sexual violence training for Oregon judges. This is not just a policy issue it is a life-or-death issue for children trapped in an abusive system.

We now have decades of scientific research proving that childhood trauma has devastating, lifelong effects. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente, has irrefutably shown that children exposed to abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction suffer long-term health consequences, including an increased risk of chronic disease, mental illness, substance abuse, and even premature death.

A child with a high ACE score meaning they have endured severe trauma has a dramatically higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, depression, PTSD, and suicide. Their life expectancy is shortened by up to 20 years if they have a score of 6 or more, my grandchild's score is 9. These facts are not up for debate. They are backed by decades of medical and psychological research, and they expose the grave consequences of failing to protect vulnerable children.

Yet despite this overwhelming evidence, Oregon family court judges, including Judge D. Charles Bailey, continue to make decisions that put abused children directly in harms way.

Judicial Failure: My grandchild

Many professionals diagnosed my grandchild with PTSD, documented the abuse, the child at almost 15 wanted to take a polygraph to prove what he has been saying since 2015 was true, he passed it strong that the abuse had happened to him, all ignored by family court.

Despite all of this, Judge D. Charles Bailey deliberately struck our grandchild's abuse from the court record, ignoring the evidence and expert testimony . He then went a step further punishing those of us who sought to protect our grandchild by ordering our grandchild back into the home of his documented abuser. When Keegan resisted, Judge Bailey fined us each \$500 per day for noncompliance when we did not force an almost 15 year old to leave his home of 7 years. We are now in Appeals court to appeal being charged with contempt and the outrageous financial penalties Judge Bailey ordered against us.

We have not been allowed any communication nor seen our grandson for over a year, we continue to be denied a show cause hearing by Judge D Charles Bailey.

There is no excuse for this.

The Saunders Study, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice, found that family court judges and custody evaluators who lack training in domestic violence and child abuse are far more likely to endanger children by awarding custody to abusers. The study identified a clear pattern: when untrained judges rely on flawed assumptions, they routinely disbelieve abuse allegations, ignore expert testimony, and side with the abusers all at the expense of the child's safety.

This is exactly what happened in my grandchild's case.

Science Should Guide Judicial Decisions Not Bias or Ignorance

The ACE Study and Saunders Study provide undeniable proof that judicial ignorance is not just a procedural issue, it is a public health crisis. Judges who fail to recognize child trauma, coercive control, and the dynamics of domestic violence are not just making bad legal decisions they are destroying lives.

We now know that a child forced to live with an abuser is at risk of:

Severe PTSD and anxiety

Increased suicide risk

Higher likelihood of developing chronic diseases

Substance abuse and addiction

There is no more time for excuses with the data and studies that present irrefutable facts of the damage done to children.