

Submitter: Elizabeth Nathan  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3835

I live in Oregon, and I am writing to strongly urge you to oppose HB 3835 currently under consideration by the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services. If passed, this dangerous bill will gut critical protections of children and teens, and more kids will be hurt. Stories about child abuse are common in Oregon, and kids need better protection now, not worse.

The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) is charged with supporting families and children to keep them safe and healthy. But this poorly written bill makes the state more vulnerable by eliminating protections against child abuse. If passed, HB 3835 will limit how and when child abuse and neglect are investigated, remove most independent oversight of DHS—including by juvenile courts—weaken legal protections that keep kids safe, and much, much more. HB 3835 will cause illegal seclusion and restraint practices in schools to go uninvestigated unless a child dies or is permanently disfigured. This bill also allows DHS to leave foster youth in homeless shelters instead of finding them a safe and loving home. Oregon shouldn't treat our most vulnerable children this way.

We've heard horrific descriptions from youth in Oregon's foster care system—including traumatic memories of repeatedly being sold for sex. Numerous state-funded providers, like Dynamic Life and Give Us This Day, have been reported to abuse kids. Years of ongoing sexual abuse of teens have gone ignored in Saint Helens schools. Why would Oregon want to stop investigating abuse?

Children and teens deserve to be safe, healthy, and loved—and the last thing you should do is take DHS at their word that weakening the law is a good thing. Every kid in Oregon—including thousands in the foster care system, in public schools, individuals held by the Oregon Youth Authority, and youth with developmental disabilities—needs you to Vote “No!” on HB 3835!

I urge you to oppose this dangerous bill.