



**Testimony in support of HB 3582
House Committee on Judiciary
Submitted by Kerry Naughton, Co-Director
March 26, 2025**

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kerry Naughton and I am the Co-Director of Oregon Abuse Advocates & Survivors in Service (OAASIS). OAASIS is a statewide organization that empowers communities to prevent child sexual abuse and help survivors live full, healthy, joyful lives. Our base is comprised of thousands of Oregonians—people who were sexually abused as children, survivors’ family members and loved ones, and community members who care about the safety, health, and well-being of survivors of child sexual abuse. We are working towards a future where all people experience a loving childhood free of abuse and trauma, and all relationships are based on respect, consent, and equity.

We are pleased to support HB 3582, which seeks to eliminate the civil statute of limitation for child sexual abuse.

A decade ago, OAASIS conducted in-depth interviews with dozens of adult survivors of child sexual abuse. We asked just a few questions: what was the harm then (at the time of the abuse); what got you through then; what is the harm now; and what gets you through now. Survivors’ responses were profound, thoughtful, and open. They also spoke to two distinct take-aways:

1. Many children were living in what we can only describe as war zones. Children often experienced sexual abuse interwoven with neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and financial abuse by one caregiver who was perpetrating harm and violence against multiple family members (including other adults in the family). These family dynamics often occurred against a backdrop of poverty, a scarcity of resources, and cultural marginalization. The children found brilliant ways to survive. But survival often meant focusing on immediate physical safety and health needs.

At OAASIS, we talk about the “S’s” of child sexual abuse—the commonly-held ways that a survivor may experience the abuse and themselves. The S’s of child sexual abuse are: scanning for safety; secrecy; separation from self and other people; shame; and simultaneous systemic barriers. Any one of these experiences can make it incredibly difficult for a survivor to disclose the abuse; add them all in the mix and it makes sense that survivors often don’t disclose the abuse until decades after they were abused. It is an act of deep courage and deep vulnerability for a survivor to disclose the abuse to anyone, let alone

strangers involved with a system that can feel overwhelming, confusing, distant, and even scary.

2. Just as clear as our first take-away is the second: the response to child sexual abuse can be as impactful as the abuse itself. In our work, we often speak to the “Yes. And.” of child sexual abuse—that multiple things and experiences (even disparate ones) can exist in the same space or same person at the same time. Yes: child sexual abuse has negative impacts on a person’s life. And: survivors can live full, healthy, joyful lives. At a physiological level, our brains are neuroplastic. We can process the negative impacts of abuse and experience healing. Just as there are the S’s of child sexual abuse, there are S’s of secure attachment patterns within our relationships to self and other people: safety; seeing; soothing; security; and sensemaking. When the response to child sexual abuse offers survivors these S’s, survivors experience greater sturdiness and wellness.

By removing arbitrary time constraints, HB 3582 provides an important avenue for our communities to respond to survivors with greater safety, seeing, security, and sensemaking. This change is an appropriate way for our structures to demonstrate that we understand trauma’s impact on people, particularly when children experience trauma. HB 3582 empowers survivors to come forward when they are ready. It will help our systems and communities better understand child sexual abuse and provide more avenues for our justice system to hold people accountable for sexually abusing children, hopefully leading to increased safety, as well as prevention policies and measures in our communities.

We hope you’ll join us in supporting HB 3582. Thank you for your time and consideration.