

March 26, 2025



**House Committee on Judiciary**

503-626-9100 

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**RE: Support for HB 3582 and the -1 Amendment – Eliminating the Statute of Limitations for Civil Sexual Abuse Claims**

Dear Chair Kropf, and members of the Committee,

I am writing today in strong support of HB 3582 and the -1 amendment to remove the statute of limitations for civil claims related to sexual assault and child sexual abuse. This legislation is critical because trauma from sexual violence can take decades to process, and the pursuit of justice should never have an expiration date.

I have been an advocate for survivors for nearly 25 years. Early in my career, I specialized as a Detective specializing child abuse and adult sexual violence investigations. Now, as the Executive Director of the Sexual Assault Resource Center in Washington County, one of only two sexual assault-specific confidential advocacy organizations in the state, I work alongside survivors every day. I have served thousands of survivors, and what I know from experience is that many do not feel safe or ready to disclose their abuse until long after legal deadlines have passed.

Under current Oregon law:


- Adult survivors must file civil claims within five years from the date they discover—or should have discovered—the connection between the abuse and the harm it caused.
- Survivors of childhood sexual abuse have until they turn 40 to file a claim.

These deadlines fail to reflect the lived experiences of survivors. HB 3582 would change that by eliminating the statute of limitations entirely, ensuring that survivors can seek justice on their own terms, no matter how long it takes for them to disclose.

Additionally, the bill's -1 amendment removes a major legal barrier that has prevented many survivors from even getting to trial. Currently, Oregon law requires survivors to prove that an institution “knowingly” allowed their abuse to happen. Defense attorneys have used this language to raise the legal bar to an impossible level, with courts sometimes requiring survivors to prove that an institution knew their specific abuser would harm them. Even in cases with overwhelming evidence of institutional negligence, survivors have been denied access to justice. The -1 amendment removes this barrier, aligning the legal standard for survivors with how negligence is treated in other areas of law.

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I want to share the stories of three survivors who I have worked with directly that illustrate why HB 3582 with the -1 amendment is so critical:

- A brave 10-year-old girl disclosed that she had been groomed and manipulated into believing the sexual abuse was a form of "family love." She only recognized that what was happening to her was abuse through an *accidental* educational opportunity. Fortunately, she was able to receive help at a young age, but for thousands of others, that moment of realization does not come until much later in life—often after statute of limitations have expired.
- A 55-year-old woman with a chronic disease and nearing the end of her life carried the trauma of childhood sexual abuse by her father for nearly 50 years. She had tried to tell her mother as a child but was silenced due to impacting the safety of the family. She never reported to law enforcement, and by the time she disclosed to her then adult daughter, her abuser had long since passed. She had no legal recourse—no opportunity to reclaim her power.
- A 29-year-old man, preparing for the birth of his first child, struggled with the trauma of a coercive sexual relationship imposed on him when he was 17 to 19 years old by his adult brother-in-law. Groomed to believe he was complicit, it took him more than a decade to understand the reality of the abuse and report it. His case could not proceed criminally due to the passage of time and impact on evidence to charge the case, leaving a civil case as his only avenue for justice. Under current law, his window to seek that justice would be closing.

These are just a few examples of the countless survivors who have been denied justice simply because they were not ready or able to come forward within an arbitrary legal timeframe. Survivors do not operate on the legal system's timeline—healing takes time, and justice should be available when they are ready or able to pursue it.

I urge you to move HB 3582 and the -1 amendment forward to ensure that all survivors of sexual violence, regardless of when they disclose, have the opportunity to seek justice. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to supporting survivors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Selover".

**Brandy Selover, MPH**

Executive Director

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