



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of House Bill 3582. This legislation is about ensuring that survivors of sexual assault and child sexual abuse have access to justice when they are ready—not when arbitrary legal deadlines dictate.

Trauma takes time. Survivors often need years, or even decades, to process what happened to them and feel safe enough to come forward. Oregon's current statute of limitations does not reflect that reality. Under existing law, adult survivors have just five years from the moment they recognize the connection between their abuse and the harm they suffered. For child survivors, the law allows claims until age 40 or five years from discovery—whichever is later. These rigid time limits fail to account for the complexities of trauma and the barriers survivors face in speaking out.

HB 3582 eliminates these civil statutes of limitations, allowing survivors to seek accountability on their own terms. This bill does not create new legal claims—it simply ensures that survivors are not shut out of the courts because they weren't ready to come forward within an arbitrary timeframe. At least 11 other states have already eliminated civil statutes of limitations for sexual assault. Oregon is behind the curve in providing survivors the justice they deserve.

Additionally, the -1 Amendment removes the word "knowingly" from ORS 12.117 and ORS 12.118—a technical but necessary fix. Under current law, institutions that receive multiple credible reports about a perpetrator can still argue they did not "know" about the risk to a specific victim. This has led to legal confusion and inconsistent court rulings, leaving some survivors without a path forward. Negligence laws should not impose an unfair and inconsistently applied burden on survivors. Removing "knowingly" aligns this statute with standard civil law and restores the Legislature's original intent: to expand, not restrict, access to justice.

Survivors deserve a legal system that reflects the realities of trauma, holds abusers and negligent institutions accountable, and provides a fair path to justice. I urge your support for HB 3582 and the -1 Amendment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rep. John Lively – HD 7 - Springfield

