

Submitter: Jules Walters
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3582

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 3582 and its -1 amendments, which take meaningful steps to eliminate the civil statute of limitations for sexual assault and child sexual abuse claims in Oregon. This legislation is a crucial and long-overdue reform that ensures survivors have access to justice, regardless of how much time has passed since their trauma.

As a sponsor of the bill, I have heard from survivors and advocates about the significant barriers that have prevented them from pursuing civil claims against both perpetrators and institutions that enabled abuse. House Bill 3582 addresses these barriers by removing the arbitrary time limits that have historically silenced survivors. The -1 amendment strengthens this effort by removing the word “knowingly” from ORS 12.117 and ORS 12.118, a legal standard that has been exploited to deny survivors their rightful claims. This language has placed an unfair and often insurmountable burden on victims, requiring them to prove that an institution had actual knowledge that a specific perpetrator would harm them. Even in cases with overwhelming evidence of institutional negligence and repeated reports of abuse, survivors have been blocked from justice due to the narrow interpretation of this provision.

By aligning the legal standard for sexual abuse survivors with how negligence is treated across other areas of law, HB 3582 and its -1 amendment provide a survivor-centered solution that acknowledges the burden this language has imposed for far too long. Passing this bill would be a critical step toward holding institutions accountable and ensuring that all survivors have a fair opportunity to seek justice. I urge the committee to move forward with HB 3582 and adopt the -1 amendments. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to supporting survivors. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can provide any further insight.