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I oppose Measure 3839.

I worked for 15 years in Portland Public Schools. As a teacher's aide, I did bus duty, playground duty, lunch duty, in addition to educational small groups. I saw and heard children up close and personal all day, every day. Children are a joy and a treasure, but at times, they could be quite hurtful to other children. There were taunts about not having certain clothes, not having the right kind of athletic shoes, about children with disabilities and because I worked in an area of Portland cruelly called Felony Flats, there was name calling about children whose family members had been in jail or prison. No child should ever have to wear a Scarlet Letter for something someone else did.

I don't see how giving a school the names of L1 and L2 Registrants will keep our children any safer. (L3 registrants are already addressed in current ORSs) Public schools already have in place a strict system of reporting suspected abuse. We were required by law to follow an exacting procedure of noticing and reporting any abuse. Every year, we were mandated to attend a repeat re-training about this. We were entrusted not just with the education of our children, but also with their safety and welfare, and we took it seriously. I did have a few occasions of having to initiate a suspicious report, so I know this system exists and it works. There is already a required, detailed background check if you're volunteering at schools, so what does this bill actually accomplish?

Level 1 and Level 2 registrants have served their time for the crimes they committed. Most of these previous offenders now have turned their lives around; they are living as our neighbors, have families, go to work every day. The statistics show us they are not the ones likely to commit a new sex offense tomorrow. Giving schools lists that broadcast whose dad or mom committed a crime years ago will not accomplish anything, could subject their children to further public shaming and re-enforces the public misconception about who really might commit tomorrow's sexual crimes.

It is a horrendous, shattering experience for any child or anyone to be sexually abused, and should never happen in the first place. But let's be smart about how we work to prevent it from happening again. Let's maintain a strong school abuse reporting process for the real suspected problems; let's continue to screen volunteers and let's put our efforts and dollars into evaluating, classifying and supervising discharged prisoners accurately and wisely. The answer is not handing our schools names who are not likely to re-offend.

I oppose Measure 3839. There are better, more effective ways to keep our children safe.

Thank you for listening.
Alice Fay