May 13, 2025

RE: House Bill 3582-1

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and members of the Committee:

The Oregon Crime Victims Law Center is submitting this testimony in support of HB 3582 with the Dash 1 Amendments, which seeks to eliminate the statute of limitations for civil actions based on sexual assault and child sexual abuse. OCVLC is a legal nonprofit that provides free legal services and information to victims in criminal and protective order cases throughout Oregon. Although we do not provide representation in civil cases, it is common for victims to reach out to us for direction and information early in the process of reporting historic abuse, and we regularly provide information on reporting to law enforcement, the possibility of criminal proceedings in cases of historic abuse, and referrals to civil resources. For a victim taking that initial step, whether immediately after abuse occurs or 25 years later, can be momentous and traumatic in and of itself.

Delayed disclosure of sexual abuse is common and occurs for a myriad of reasons. Our callers report delays due to psychological, systemic, economic, and environmental factors; the decision to report is complex and as varied as the survivors themselves. HB 3582's amendments to ORS 12.117 and ORS 12.118 to eliminate the statute of limitations on sexual assault and child sexual abuse and clarify the legislature's intentions regarding the scope of ORS 12.117's application to third parties would be a step towards aligning Oregon's laws with the reality of survivors' legal needs. Many factors make it challenging to seek justice after a delayed disclosure, whether through the criminal justice system or civil courts, but arbitrary deadlines and inconsistent application of legal standards should not be among them. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Emily La Brecque
Senior Staff Attorney