



Dr. Thuy Tran
State Representative
House District 45

Testimony - House Judiciary
HB 4157 - Hearsay Exemption
2/9/26 - 3:00pm - HR B

Introduction

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Wallan and Chotzen, and members of the committee: For the record, I am Representative Dr. Thuy Tran, representing House District 45.

For generations, our justice system has relied on a foundational principle: the right to confront one's accuser. But that principle was never intended to be a shield for those who profit from violence, coercion, and fear. I am here today to urge your support for **HB 4157**. This bill addresses a narrow but critical gap in Oregon's evidentiary law—a gap that traffickers knowingly exploit to silence victims and evade justice.

The Problem: Forced Silence

Human trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise. In Oregon, it has grown more sophisticated, fueled by a demand for underage girls and enabled by digital platforms.

Traffickers maintain control through what we call "the three Ts": **Terror, Trauma, and Tactics.**

They know that if a survivor cannot safely appear in court—whether due to intimidation, trauma-bonding, or physical disappearance—their words may never be heard. Currently, if a survivor is too frightened to testify, their reliable, recorded statements are often excluded. We are essentially allowing traffickers to benefit from the very trauma they inflict.

The Solution: HB 4157

This bill does not lower the burden of proof. Instead, it modernizes our rules of evidence to reflect the reality of modern exploitation. Modeled after Oregon's existing domestic violence statutes, HB 4157 creates a carefully limited hearsay exception that:

- Applies only to specific trafficking crimes;



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- Requires statements to be recorded or made to trained professionals; and
- Grants judges the discretion to admit these statements only after finding clear "indications of reliability."

The Local Impact

This isn't an abstract policy debate. In my district, we see this exploitation daily on **NE 82nd Avenue**, directly across from **McDaniel High School**. Students walk to class past victims being trafficked in broad daylight, asking us why we aren't doing more. By passing HB 4157, we tell those students and those survivors that their safety matters more than a trafficker's ability to intimidate.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Senator Taylor and Representative Chotzen for their guidance in keeping this bill targeted, and my 20+ bipartisan colleagues who have signed on in support.

I am deeply grateful to the local and national organizations—**Safety Compass, Oregon Law Center, Oregon Alliance to End Gender-Based Violence, Rights4Girls, the Sex Trade Survivor Caucus, EPIK Project, and World Without Exploitation**—as well as individuals like **Esther Garrett** and **Robin Miller** for their tireless advocacy.

I also want to acknowledge those voicing concerns today, including **SWAA** and groups representing public defenders. We share a mutual goal: ending exploitation. While I am firm in my conviction that this bill only targets traffickers and those purchasing minors, I listen to their concerns with open ears. My office is fully committed to working with all groups to bring survivors and sex workers out of the legal shadows of past convictions so they can lead flourishing lives.

Conclusion



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We showed courage and clarity for survivors of domestic violence by updating our laws. It is time we do the same for victims of human trafficking. Let's ensure that justice is no longer denied simply because a survivor was forcefully kept away from a courtroom. I urge a **DO PASS** recommendation on HB 4157. Thank you.