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February 2, 2012

Representative Sara Gelser  
900 Court St NE, H-285  
Salem, OR, 97301

Dear Representative Gelser:

The Oregon Community College Association, representing Oregon's seventeen community colleges, supports HB 4016 as amended. This bill would add community college and university employees to the definition of school employees who are mandatory child abuse reporters under ORS 419B.

With the focus on greater coordination between high schools and community colleges as we create a more seamless education system, we are seeing greater number of students under the age of eighteen on our campuses. Adding community college employees as mandatory reporters ensures that our employees have clear direction on how to address a situation when they are faced with the knowledge of possible child abuse. As mandatory reporters if they have reasonable cause and knowledge of a possible situation involving child abuse, they must report that information to law enforcement authorities or the Department of Human Services. These are the appropriate authorities to screen a report of potential child abuse and take appropriate action. It removes the possibility of a situation where a case of child abuse might get reported to a supervisor or college administrator but never to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

While the bill does not require a community college to provide training to employees, we believe many of our colleges will choose to make training resources available. The Department of Human Services has developed a video and a website to help train K-12 school employees. If this bill passes, OCCA would be happy to work with DHS and the colleges to ensure that the training materials are reflective of the unique situations that might be encountered by employees on a community college campus.

We look forward to continuing to work on this issue with you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Karen M. Smith  
General Counsel