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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESS RELEASE

Oregon House Passes Bill to Protect Child Welfare Workers from Harassment and Stalking

In a landslide victory, 45 ayes to 3 nays, **HB 3391**, carried by Rep. Evan (D-Monmouth), overwhelmingly passed out of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing on April 30th, 2015 and is headed to the Senate side for a first reading.

As the Department of Human Services (DHS) has experienced a sharp increase in both the number and severity of threats made against state workers, **HB 3391 was implemented to protect child welfare employees by requiring the Attorney General to file action on their behalf for stalking and unwanted, inappropriate contact.**

“HB 3391 is critical because it will provide added protection for state employees who we ask to go into very difficult situations when emotions are in a volatile state” says Rep. Evans. “Many of these child welfare workers, who are working to protect children, are being stalked, hunted, and often times must transfer job locations to ensure their own safety.”

Specifically, **HB 3391 does two things to combat inappropriate behavior towards state workers:**

First, it acts as a shield by providing child welfare workers with the much needed support and protection of the Attorney General’s office if they are faced with harassment during the course of their work. The Attorney General’s Office would be able to obtain protective orders on behalf of the employee after preliminary resources and procedures have been exhausted.

Second, HB 3391 creates a task force component which would research and analyze the best possible preventative measures for keeping child welfare employees and their families safe from future unwanted and harmful threats.

Child welfare workers deserve the necessary protection to ensure that they can effectively care for children in hostile and dangerous environments. HB 3391 does exactly that; and we are pleased to see such a bill gain ground on the path towards further protection for the people who advocate for Oregon’s children.

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