



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 17, 2017

To: Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair
Duane Stark, Vice Chair
Tawna Sanchez, Vice Chair
House Human Services Committee

Re: HB 2216 Oregon Foster Children's Sibling Bill of Rights – **Support**

The League believes that early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports the Department of Human Services in its custody of children who cannot remain in their family homes.

In this bill, children who have been in DHS custody are affirming their rights to maintain their family relationships with siblings. Children who have lived in homes where they experienced abuse or neglect often have strong ties with siblings who have shared the same experiences. These children need stability and if they are separated, they need contact with their siblings.

The Oregon Foster Children's Sibling Bill of Rights puts in statute the expectations for siblings in custody to have phone or electronic contacts, physical visits and arranged activities in order to maintain these important relationships. Former foster children participated in the development of these rights and want to see them posted in agency offices and foster homes.

The League supports the amended Sibling Bill of Rights which extends these rights to guardianships and adoption agreements as approved by the court.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Karen Nibler in black ink.

Karen Nibler,
LWVOR Social Policy Coordinator