

Mid-Valley Women's
Crisis Service



Serving Victims and Survivors of
Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault,
Stalking & Human Trafficking
Since 1973

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795 Winter Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-378-1572 office
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Co-Chair Nathanson, Co-Chair Bates, and members of the committee,

My name is Kirstin Heydel and I am the Youth Services Coordinator for Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service (MVWCS.) Our program serves victims and survivors of teen dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion County. Since 1973, MVWCS has provided hope and safety to victims and survivors affected by all forms of abuse. I, along with other advocates from MVWCS, believe that passing SB 5529 and preserving the 60-month time limit for families and children needing assistance will not only benefit those who desperately need this assistance and support many of the victims we work with, but would be a fiscally responsible move for legislators to make.

In Oregon, victims of domestic violence who have children can apply for Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors (TA-DVS) through the Department of Human Services (DHS). This is a grant (of up to \$1,200 dollars) to help keep children safe and this often includes relocating to a new place to provide safe shelter. This grant is crucial for victims fleeing domestic violence. Often women who leave an abusive situation have no access to financial means as most abusers use financial abuse to keep victims from leaving. Without access to this grant, thousands of women across Oregon would have to stay with an abusive partner as a last resort.

Many victims fleeing abuse need TANF and SNAP (food assistance) at times because they have no financial resources. These programs provide victims and survivors the resources they need to prevent homelessness against victims of domestic violence. The services DHS provides allow victims to start a new life free of violence and create independent, healthy lives.

Recently a bill was passed that designated co-located advocates at some DHS self-sufficiency and child welfare offices. These are advocates from domestic violence agencies who are stationed at the offices so they can assist any victims who need assistance. Domestic violence co-located advocates partner with Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency to provide survivor parents with in-depth safety planning, education, advocacy and on-going support. Co-located advocates provide support to caseworkers and can help inform them about the barriers victims have and how to most effectively safety plan with them. Our agency has seen a tremendous increase in victims receiving efficient assistance and has strengthened our partnership with case-workers at Self-Sufficiency and Child Welfare. It would be in the victims' best interest and the state's best interest to support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the impact this legislation would have on victims and survivors.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kirstin Heydel, Youth Services Coordinator
Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service
Kirstin@hopeandsafety.org