

Lindsay Nelson
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TO: Joint Committee on Public Safety
FR: Lindsay Nelson
DA: April 3, 2013
RE: Support for HB 3194 Public Safety Package

Co Chair ~~Becker~~ and members of the committee:

My name is Lindsay Nelson and I am a domestic violence survivor, and an advocate for holistic criminal justice structural transformation. I am here today to testify in support of the Oregon Public Safety Package, HB 3194.

HB 3194 is important to me because I support efforts to update and improve Oregon's public safety system. Oregon can balance holding people who commit crimes accountable while improving our public safety system by reinvesting public safety dollars to improve services for victims of crime, increase community corrections and other public safety efforts and invest in rehabilitation through increased access to mental health and drug treatment services. I have a well rounded experience that has informed me that this the best approach in addition to first hand being a survivor. I have served as a victim advocate at a district attorney office, which led me to complete a Masters in Public Administration focused in criminal justice, have worked with offenders at a county community corrections agency, and now do policy advocacy.

As I experienced, anyone, regardless of their ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, or family support can be victimized by domestic violence, sexual abuse, stalking and such crimes. It is vital that a person is on the other side of the emergency hotline. That a trustworthy hand is there to usher you out of danger and into a safe bed, when you have feared for your life and sanity one last time. Where does one go if they are making one of 22,000 cries for help that went unmet in 2010? You go back into a home that has now become exponentially more dangerous and imprisoning due to the attempt made. To truly address the safety of the public, we must reinvest in victim services.

Victim services are essential to serve victims in the community upfront through providing the hotline, safety planning, and shelter beds. Services in the criminal justice system are essential to informing victims in a timely and accurate matter midst shifting schedules and long dockets. With the ever increasing case loads, these advocates are helping the state comply with the constitution in informing victims of their rights throughout each case. As the Supreme Court made clear in the Barrett case, this is necessary each and every time. Next, these services help survivors rebuild their lives by connecting them to support and resources. There is hope for victims when they are supported, to be survivors like myself and others who now thrive and fight to be the voice for those who need a "yes" for that bed that night.

HB 3194 has the right balance of ensuring that people who commit a crime are held accountable for their actions and makes Oregon smarter on crime by reinvesting a portion of corrections savings into victim services. Ensuring that we have a strong public safety system is a part of creating the safe and strong communities we all want to live in.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. Again, I ask for your support for HB 3194 and I urge the Committee to move this package forward.