

Amanda Green
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Portland, OR 97217

TO: Joint Committee on Public Safety
FR: Amanda Green
DA: April 5, 2013
RE: Support for HB 3194 Public Safety Package

Dear Chairs Garrett, Olson, Prozanski, and Winters and Members of the Joint Committee on Public Safety,

My name is Amanda Green and I am writing today to testify in support of the Oregon Public Safety Package, HB 3194. I would like to voice my support of HB 3194 not only as an advocate working for victim rights and violence prevention, but also as a survivor of sexual violence.

HB 3194 is important to me because I want to improve Oregon's public safety system for victims. 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. This will make individuals, families, and communities across Oregon safer.

At the age of 16 I was drugged and assaulted by my boyfriend, whom although I had only been dating for two months, I had gone to school and church with since kindergarten. After the assault he threatened and emotionally manipulated me into silence. It was three years before I was able to talk about my abuse. In that three years of silence I developed an eating disorder and suffered from crippling anxiety issues that resulted in my having to take a year off of college. And then I found help, or rather, it found me. To be frank, I wasn't actually aware that help was to be had after my assault – no one had ever spoken to me about sexual violence. When I stumbled across Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment, or PAVE in college, I was connected to both individual and group therapy and other survivors with whom I could share. Eventually, PAVE empowered me to help other survivors.

In my several years of prevention and advocacy work, I have had the opportunity to walk many survivors through processes of healing and justice. Repeatedly, the same issues have come up – barriers in the justice system and a veritable lack of available services, especially for low income survivors and those from historically marginalized communities.

In my own struggles with sexual violence and those I've witnessed I cannot over emphasize the importance of support services being available after the crime. While I never sought justice through the criminal justice system for my crime, I know that the reason I was able to become the person I am today - am able to live a full, healthy, and happy life - is because of the access I had to both individual and group therapy and a to a community of other survivors with whom I could find a path to healing. The survivors I have worked and shared with over the years are, believe it or not, are some of the most hopeful and optimistic people I have ever met. There is

so much hope out there even under the bleakest of circumstance, but this hope is only garnered when survivors have access to the appropriate assistance they need and whole communities that support them.

Nothing can take away violence that has already occurred, but with support, survivors do not have to be stuck in the trauma from the violence. For Oregon to thrive, it is imperative that no survivor is ever stuck and this will require resources to fund the domestic and sexual violence services that provide the support for survivors. Additional funding can be found through passage of HB 3194. HB 3194 will also provide for justice, which means something different to every survivor. For many survivors, like me, safety and justice will be found outside of any interaction with the criminal justice system. For other survivors, the criminal justice system is an important part of their pathway to safety and justice. Oregon has strong victims' rights that allow the victim to tell the judge about the impact of the crime. It's important to have sentencing decisions made in open court so the judge can factor in the impact on the victim and what the victim thinks an appropriate sentence is.

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.

Sincerely,



Amanda A. Green