



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

Oregon Commission for Women
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"
1819 SW 5th Ave., Portland, OR 97201
O 503.302.9725/F 503.473.8519
Email: oaco.mail@state.or.us
Website: www.oregon.gov/Women

Testimony in Support of HB 2226A
May 16, 2013, Senate Judiciary Committee

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Close and Senators Dingfelder,
Kruse and Roblan:

The Oregon Commission for Women, in its role of advocate for
the women of Oregon, strongly supports HB 2226A.

Survivors of domestic violence often find that their abusers,
resentful of their partners' escape from their violence, will hunt
them down and try to harm them and/or their children. Oregon
enacted its Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) (ORS
192.822) to help survivors deal with these issues. One of the
stated purposes of the ACP is to "[p]revent assailants or
**potential assailants of the victim from finding the victim
through public records.**" But the Address Confidentiality
Program was created before the Internet made it possible to
locate almost anyone with a few keystrokes, or by paying a small
fee to a data broker.

HB 2226A helps to close the protection gap, so that a domestic
violence survivor can, if necessary, ensure that her abuser cannot
find her by searching for her by name, and then searching public
records for her name change petition. It also dovetails with the Social Security
Administration's program allowing domestic violence victims to obtain a new social
security number in order to prevent post-abuse stalking. Oregon should follow many other
states, including California, in providing a mechanism for confidential name-change for
past victims of domestic violence who have been pursued by their abusers.

HB 2226A contains appropriate safeguards, including judicial oversight and discretion, to
help ensure that confidential name changes will not be abused. In post-drafting meetings
with stakeholders, we learned that they would like to see an amendment to allow a Judge to
seal the record for application even if the name change attempt does not finalize or is
abandoned prior to Judgment.

The bill seeks no additional funds. Courts already have procedures in place for sealing
records. There may be a slight undetermined increase in the number of applications for the
Address Confidentiality Program and an initial one-time expense to develop educational

OR Commission for Women

Chair:

Stephanie Vardavas

Vice Chair:

Jeanne Burch

Commissioners:

Jenny Greenleaf
Megan Jacquot
Sunny Petit
Cynthia Scheines
Mariahm Stephenson

Legislative Liaisons:

Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson
Rep. Betty Komp

Staff:

Lucy Baker, Administrator
Nancy Kramer, Exec. Asst.

materials for shelters and legal aid offices, but the fiscal impact of this bill will be minimal. It is not expected that the bill will overwhelm courthouses with applicants, because name change is a drastic step that ought to be utilized only in extreme circumstances. Its potential benefits to domestic violence survivors, who are among the most vulnerable Oregonians, are incalculable.

The Oregon Commission for Women urges an Aye vote on HB 2226A.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Vardavas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Vardavas, Chair, Oregon Commission for Women