



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

Testimony in Support of HB 2226  
February 20, 2013, House Judiciary Committee

Chair Barker; Co-Vice Chairs Garrett and Krieger;  
Representatives Barton, Cameron, Hicks, Olson, Tomei, and  
Williamson.

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

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 2226 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 2226 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  
materials for shelters and legal aid offices, but the fiscal impact of this bill will be minimal.

## **OR Commission for Women**

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Stephanie Vardavas

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### **Staff:**

Lucy Baker, Administrator

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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 2226.

Stephanie Vardavas, Chair, Oregon Commission for Women

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Vardavas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.