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3910 S.E. Stark Street, Portland, OR 97214

503-771-5503

To: Chair Barker and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Jenny Woodson, Legal Advocacy Coordinator
Date: March 11, 2013
Re: Sexual Assault Protection Order, HB 2779

I submit this written testimony in support of the passage of HB 2779. For the past 9 years I have worked in three different Oregon Counties with stalking, domestic and sexual assault survivors for two nonprofit service providers. The majority of this time has been working closely with survivors applying for protective orders; currently I facilitate the Restraining Order Room in Multnomah County courthouse, assisting petitioners applying for Family Abuse Prevention Act, Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Protection Act, and Stalking Protection Orders.

Over the years I have worked with many survivors that would have benefited from a Sexual Assault Protective Order. One of these survivors was a woman who was sexually assaulted by a man she knew through her church. They had no relationship besides being acquaintances and typically only saw each other at church related functions. One night they stayed late to assist in some clean up and while walking her to her car he pushed her into her car and sexually assaulted her. After the assault he threatened to tell her family (also church members), the pastor, and church community that she was promiscuous and came onto him if she were to ever tell anyone. She chose not to report him to the police or tell anyone. When they would run into each other, he would look at her so intently until he saw her become nervous and he would slightly shake his head and look pointedly at her family or the pastor. She knew he was reminding her of his threat to tell. She became more and more distraught and decided it was time to tell. She didn't want to report to the police but did want to apply for a protective order so he couldn't be around her anymore. She came to the courthouse to apply. The only protective order she qualified for was the Stalking Protective Order which requires two more contacts from the respondent that place the petitioner in fear of physical harm. She had already been assaulted by this person and his intimidation after the assault felt very threatening, but the court didn't think so. The language of in the law is very specific about what the contact must be like and though the Judge greatly emphasized with her situation, he couldn't grant her the order. She left the court with no protection.

If you have any questions or need any further information regarding how the passage of this bill will benefit survivors I work with, please feel free to contact me at: 503-802-0506 or jwoodson@voaor.org.

Sincerely,

Jenny Woodson