



March 12, 2013

Oregon State Legislature  
Oregon State House of Representatives  
House Judiciary Committee  
Rep. Jeff Barker, Chair

Re: Testimony in support of House Bill 2997 on behalf of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force supports passage of House Bill 2779 creating a civil order protecting victims of sexual assault, a Sexual Assault Protective Order (SAPO).

The Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF) is a private, non-profit, non-governmental statewide agency that provides leadership on best practices in the response to and prevention of sexual violence. The SATF's appointed membership of over 100 Oregonians from across the state represent professionals including law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, educators, treatment providers, offender managers, medical providers, researchers, and others. Establishing a SAPO for sexual assault victims is a priority for the SATF membership.

At least 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men will be victims of a sexual assault in their lifetimes. The vast majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated not by strangers, but by persons known to the victim. Sometimes the perpetrator is a family or household member, but often it is an acquaintance, a co-worker, a neighbor, or a friend. Sexual assault is a life-changing, violent intrusion on a person's autonomy. This is a crime that shatters a person's sense of the world; it forces its victims to re-evaluate their ability to exist safely and to trust the people around them.

Restoring a sense of safety following a sexual assault is critical. Victim advocates, family members and friends can and do help victims make "safety plans," but for many victims in Oregon, one of the most effective tools is not available to them. While in Oregon protective orders for victims of intimate partner violence, elder abuse, abuse against people with disabilities and stalking are available, there is no such protection for many victims of sexual assault.

Protective orders are proven mechanisms for providing safety and security for victims, and for preventing future assault. Passage of HB 2779 will add Oregon to the nineteen other states (including Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico,

North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin) that currently have a civil protection order for victims of sexual assault.


This legislation will create a sexual assault protection order for victims of sexual assault who are assaulted by someone who is not a family member or intimate partner. By providing protection to these victims in the aftermath of a sexual assault, the legislation will fix a hole currently existing in Oregon's law by providing an option for victims of sexual assault who are not eligible for other protective orders.

The SATF recognizes and respects the reality of the fiscal situation Oregon faces. As such, we have offered in HB 2997 ways to partner with the courts and leverage our membership resources to reduce the fiscal impact on the State. The SATF will develop the forms for the SAPO (while requesting no funding to support this effort), and will maintain the forms for use by petitioners for the first several years; after that time, the Oregon Judicial Department will maintain the forms that will have been in use.

The Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force urges you to pass HB 2779 establishing the Sexual Assault Protective Order.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Cynthia J. Stinson  
Interim Executive Director