

February 9, 2015

Senator Chip Shields and Representative Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chairs  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Sub-Committee on Public Safety  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE, H-174  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Fully funding (\$58.5 million) Justice Reinvestment in the Criminal Justice Commission (SB 5506)

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jayne Downing and I am the Executive Director at the Center for Hope & Safety. Our agency has been providing hope and safety for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking since 1973. I respectfully submit this testimony today regarding the increase in demand for services for victims and the critical need for funding community-based agencies that provide lifesaving services across Oregon. I urge you to fully fund Justice Reinvestment in the Criminal Justice Commission's budget (SB 5506) at \$58.5 million.

The Justice Reinvestment Act of 2013 (HB 3194) sets Oregon on course to establish a more effective and less costly public safety system. Oregon should be able to avoid the need to build or bond for a new prison for at least the next five years, saving \$300 million during that same time period. Passing the Justice Reinvestment Act of 2013 was an important step, but only the first one in a multi-year process to rebalance how Oregon prioritizes its spending. Our success will depend on a continued commitment to a new way of addressing public safety in Oregon through dedicated resources to build an infrastructure of more cost-effective means of crime prevention and recidivism reduction, and to provide greater access to community-based victim services that help crime survivors get safe and rebuild their lives.

The Center for Hope & Safety has seen a dramatic increase in the number of victims coming to us for services. Over the last three years, we have doubled the number of contacts to our program; averaging about more than 20,000 contacts to our program each year. This huge increase in contacts, including calls to our 24-hour crisis line and survivors walking into our office for support with safety planning and protection orders, has placed an incredible strain on our advocacy staff. We have 11 full-time staff in our office, and an additional three co-located advocates (2.7FTE) who spend 80% of their time in DHS Self-Sufficiency and Child Welfare offices. As you can imagine, we are very busy!

Even with these huge increases, we know there is more work to be done. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 37% of Oregon women experience physical violence, rape, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. This translates to about 40,000 women in Marion County alone. According to a study conducted by Portland State University, our program should have more than 30 advocates to provide just crisis intervention services. Their study did not even include the amount of staff necessary to provide shelter, support groups, transitional housing, community education, and many other services the Center for Hope & Safety already provides.

In Marion County, we have a strong and collaborative working relationship with our District Attorney and Marion County Sheriff's Offices. We respect the work they do to hold abusers accountable in our community. Services to community-based victim services are also an important piece of the response to public safety. Think of the increase in calls to 9-1-1 if

# Center for HOPE & SAFETY



*Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service*

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605 Center St NE • Salem, OR 97301 • [hopeandsafety.org](http://hopeandsafety.org)  
503-378-1572 office • 503-399-7722 hotline

*because everyone deserves a life free of violence*

our crisis line were not available. Think of the strain to services if our shelter had to close. Providing access to victim services does more than just respond to crime, it helps prevent future victimization and future offending.

As an advocate working with victims of domestic and sexual violence, I see daily how victims struggle to access the limited resources available in Oregon. In many communities, victims often end up staying with an abusive partner or become homeless because there are not enough shelters or services for them. Service providers are struggling as funding resources decrease but demand for services continues to increase. There are shelters and agencies all across Oregon that have already shut down or reduced services due to lack of funding.

The victims and survivors we represent need your help. We know the economic times and your choices are difficult, that is why it is critical to increase services to some of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our state. With your help, we can continue to save lives in Oregon!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Jayne Downing". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jayne Downing  
Executive Director