

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 Lindsay Nelson and I am a domestic violence survivor, and an advocate for holistic criminal justice structural transformation. In 2013, I testified in support of HB 3194 (the Justice Reinvestment Act). I submit this testimony today to urge you to fully fund Justice Reinvestment in the Criminal Justice Commission's budget (SB 5506) at \$58.5 million.

HB 3194 was important to me because I support efforts to update and improve Oregon's public safety system. Oregon can balance holding people who commit crimes accountable while improving our public safety system by reinvesting public safety dollars to improve services for victims of crime, increase community corrections and other public safety efforts and invest in rehabilitation through increased access to mental health and drug treatment services. I have a well-rounded experience that has informed me that this is the best approach, in addition to first hand being a survivor. I have served as a victim advocate at a district attorney's office, which led me to complete a Masters in Public Administration focused in criminal justice, have worked with offenders at a county community corrections agency, and now do policy advocacy.

As I experienced, anyone, regardless of their ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, or family support can be victimized by domestic violence, sexual abuse, stalking, and such crimes. It is vital that a person is on the other side of the emergency hotline. That a trustworthy hand is there to usher you out of danger and into a safe bed, when you have feared for your life and sanity one last time. Where does one go if they are making one of almost 12,000 cries for help that went unmet in 2013? You go back into a home that has now become exponentially more dangerous and imprisoning due to the attempt made. To truly address the safety of the public, we must invest in victim services.

Victim services are essential to serve victims in the community upfront through providing the hotline, safety planning, and shelter beds. There is hope for victims when they are supported, to be survivors like myself and others who now thrive and fight to be the voice for those who need a "yes" for that bed that night.

Justice Reinvestment 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.

Ensuring we have a strong public safety system – including community-based nonprofit victim services programs – is part of creating the safe and strong communities we all want to live in. I urge the Committee to fully fund Justice Reinvestment at \$58.5 million.

Thank you for your time and attention to this. Lindsay Nelson