

**TESTIMONY on SB 132**

**Submitted to the Senate Health Care Committee**

**By Kerry Naughton, Crime Survivors Program Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice**

**February 16, 2014**

Chair Monnes-Anderson, Vice-Chair Kruse, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kerry Naughton and I am the Crime Survivor Program director at Partnership for Safety and Justice. Partnership of Safety and Justice is a statewide, non-profit organization that has worked in Oregon for 15 years. We are focused on creating a public safety and criminal justice system that works for everyone. We believe that effective public safety requires being smart about crime by putting accountability first, providing crime survivors with the services they need, and supporting proven strategies to prevent future violence.

As the director of PSJ's crime victim program, I want to begin my testimony by emphasizing the importance of being responsive to the needs of victims. Our criminal justice system is too focused on people who commit crimes and does not provide enough support or services to the people most directly impacted by the crimes that have been committed: crime victims.

It is clear that the intent of SB 132 is to be responsive to health care workers who are victims of assault. We applaud efforts to be responsive to the concerns of victims.

For that reason we are neutral on this bill, but wanted to bring you our perspective on the issue of accountability to, and safety for, victims of violent crimes.

At PSJ, we prioritize public safety policies that prevent crime and reduce recidivism. For these reason, we believe there are more impactful solutions for victims of assault in health care settings than increasing the sentence for third degree assault – solutions we don't invest in enough. We know that workers are safer when their institutions are fully staffed and provided with meaningful training to handle the range of behaviors they face daily in their jobs. These investments can change the culture of a facility and lead to fewer incidents of violence.

In the cases where violence does occur, we believe that victims should be provided with the full range of support for their medical and emotional needs. Surviving violence can have long term impact that may not be immediately apparent. Survivors need continued access to resources to manage the emotional impact of the assault.

It is worth remembering that during the 2013 legislative session, Oregon passed HB 3194 which reduced sentences for certain crimes and pledged to invest savings into programs that prevent crime, reduce recidivism and increase access to victim services. We at PSJ believe that is a smart approach to public



[www.safetyandjustice.org](http://www.safetyandjustice.org)

503-335-8449 • 825 NE 20th, Suite 250, Portland, OR 97232 • 503-232-1922 (fax)

safety that helps us save money from the reduced need for prisons and invests in people rebuilding their lives after crime.

We commend the health care workers who at times are risking their safety to do their important jobs and understand the interest in elevating their work within the assault statute. That said, we believe there are more effective ways to increase safety, prevent assault and invest in the needs of the victims.

Thank you for your consideration.