

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 5516

**Submitted to the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety
By Kerry Naughton, Crime Survivors Program Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice
March 30, 2015**

Co-Chair Shields, Co-Chair Williamson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kerry Naughton and I am the Crime Survivors 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.

These values drive our work, which is why Partnership for Safety and Justice supports a \$1.6 million increase to the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS), to fund ODSVS at \$10 million in the 2013-2015 biennium. This funding increase is vital to the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities throughout Oregon.

I've worked with victims of crime for the past 16 years, helping people process the psychological impact that comes from physical and sexual harm. The trauma that survivors experience is unexpected and overwhelming. Survivors often experience a combination of confusion, anger, sorrow, guilt, numbness, feeling unsafe, and fear that people won't believe the survivor or will blame the survivor for the harm that was done to them. This leads to the survivor feeling like she or he isn't in control—not only of their life experiences, but of their responses to life experiences. One survivor I worked with said she felt like the ball in a pinball machine—hurtling around intense and complicated emotions, not sure which one she'd land on next.

Thankfully, Oregon has a strong network of domestic and sexual violence services that help people experiencing violence find safety and rebuild their lives. Domestic and sexual violence services literally save lives. They provide victims the tools necessary to become survivors—shelter, safety planning, counseling, medical accompaniment, and legal advocacy. A report from the Johns Hopkins University revealed that accessing domestic violence services reduced re-assault by up to 70%.

Providing access to domestic and sexual violence services does more than just remove a barrier to success from an individual person or family—it removes barriers to the health and well-being of us all. Access to victims' services reduces homelessness, saves millions in medical costs, increases the effectiveness of substance abuse programs, helps children succeed in school and adults stay in jobs, and breaks cycles of violence.

These lifesaving services are fundamental to the well-being of every Oregon community. Yet they are so underfunded that almost 12,000 requests for emergency shelter from violence couldn't be met in 2013. That's almost two unmet requests every hour—of every day—of 2013.