



Support Survivor Safety (SB 5516)

Fund the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) at \$10 million for 2015-2017

Dear Co-Chairs Shields and Williamson, and Members of the Public Safety Subcommittee:

Thank you for taking the time to read our testimony. HAVEN From Domestic and Sexual Violence provides comprehensive services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and sex trafficking. We provide shelter services at confidential off-site locations for those survivors who need emergency housing in order to begin their journey toward safety and healing.

The Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (ODSVS) Fund is a lifeline to Oregonians. ODSVS funds emergency shelter, expert safety planning, counseling, and other support services to Oregonians fleeing domestic and sexual violence in every county across the state. But in 2013, almost 12,000 requests for emergency shelter from violence couldn't be met because of a lack of funding. That's almost 2 unmet requests every hour of every day for the entire year. Almost half of these requests came from victims seeking shelter for their children, too.

For Oregonians who are able to access services, there is help. Access to domestic and sexual violence services reduces re-assault up to 70%.

Here's one example of how ODSVS helps victims become survivors.

HAVEN From Domestic and Sexual Violence – The Dalles, Oregon, serves Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam and Wheeler Counties. HAVEN also provides services to surrounding communities along the Columbia River Gorge and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation.

Wasco County is recognized as a rural county and Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler Counties are recognized as frontier counties, having 2.1, 1.6, and 0.8 persons per square mile respectively. Individuals who live in rural areas face unique challenges, including higher rates of unemployment and poverty, and less availability of transportation, childcare, and other services. According to the 2012 US Census, both Wasco and Sherman County have a significantly higher rate of persons living below poverty, 19.3% and 22.4% respectively, than the average rate for the State of Oregon (15.5%). Additionally, Business Oregon classifies Gilliam County and cities within the other three counties as economically distressed, based on unemployment rates. Domestic and Sexual Violence can happen to anyone, and we also know that the intersection of poverty, trauma and domestic/sexual violence can occur at high rates.

The population of HAVEN's four county service area is predominantly white. However, both Wasco County and the city of The Dalles have a higher percentage of Hispanic/Latinos than the state average (12.2%), at 15.9% and 17% respectively (US Census 2012 estimate). Additionally, over half of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation lands lie within Wasco County. Though the majority of tribal members live in the town of Warm Springs, there are a significant number of tribal members who live in Wasco County. Both Sherman and Wasco Counties have a higher percentage of Native Americans than the state average (1.8%), at 2.4% and 4.5% (US Census 2012 estimate). Furthermore, the unincorporated Native American community of Celilo Village is also located in Wasco County as well as

an informal community where Celilo Falls used to be located along the Columbia River, at which many families reside in trailers, camp add-ons, and small tents.

Currently HAVEN is limited in the number and type of services we can provide to survivors of domestic/sexual violence due to limited funding. This is especially problematic for our most vulnerable populations who come from underserved communities, including rural and frontier areas, Native Americans, individuals who speak Spanish and have limited English proficiency, and survivors who are incarcerated.

HAVEN asks you today to fully fund the CVSD Budget at \$10 million to support ODSVS, Crime Victims Compensation, Address Confidentiality Program, and other vital services for victims of domestic and sexual violence (DSV). We see firsthand how these programs support survivors in our communities. On a monthly basis, HAVEN is forced to turn away an average of 9 adult victims and 7 children who witness abuse in the home because we don't have the capacity to provide the emergency shelter services these families need. These victims are seeking crisis shelter as the result of abuse. If ODSVS funding were at \$10 million, HAVEN would be able to better meet the needs of our participants that would include transportation, emergency response and providing housing for up to 4 additional survivors and their children per month.

Funding the ODSVS budget at \$10 million will help address many of the gaps in services. While it won't solve the problem entirely, it's a powerful step in the right direction. Survivors of domestic/sexual violence will see an improvement in access to services and an increase in shelter availability if the Oregon Legislature fully funds the ODSVS at \$10 million.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Tara Koch, Executive Director

Anna K. Williams, MSW Program Manager

HAVEN From Domestic and Sexual Violence Staff and Board of Directors