

# OREGON LAW CENTER

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**Testimony in Support of HB 2628A  
Before the Senate Judiciary Committee  
April 30th, 2015  
Submitted by Sybil Hebb**

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Kruse, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon in support of House Bill 2628A, which would make one simple but important change to Oregon's Stalking Protective Order Statute.

Domestic and sexual violence are serious public health and safety issues in our state. Victims and their children suffer great psychological, emotional, and physical trauma, which have long term impact on their lives. These issues greatly contribute to the vulnerability of our clients, and further trap them in poverty and crisis. OLC is committed to supporting the coordinated community and system response necessary to help prevent this violence, and to help victims in crisis move towards the safety and stability they need for recovery.

**HB 2628A will ensure that all stalking protection orders are available without court filing or service fees.** Under current law, most stalking orders are already exempted from filing fees, as are protection orders under the Family Abuse Prevention Act (FAPA), the Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Abuse Prevention Act (EPPWDAPA), and the Sexual Abuse Protection Order (SAPO) Act. It is important to courts as well as to petitioners in need that the emergency relief offered by these protection orders be available in an efficient and expedited manner. Fees have not been charged for issuance of these orders since their creation. However, fees are currently charged in the rare instance that a petitioner for a stalking order includes a claim for damages in the request for relief.

**HB 2628A will ensure that Oregon will continue to be eligible for important federal grant dollars.** Very few (approximately 4/year) stalking petitioners seek damages as part of their request for relief. But the existence of the authority for this fee impacts all of Oregon. One of the conditions for states to be eligible for Federal Violence Against Women Office (VAWO) grant dollars is that stalking orders, like other protection orders, are available without filing or service fees. Our federal grant monitors have indicated that our statute must be amended in order to assure our continued eligibility for VAWO grant dollars, which fund many valuable projects supporting law enforcement, prosecution, court, and community based programs across the state focusing on domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your Aye vote. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.