

Testimony in Support of SB 759 A
Submitted to the House Committee on Higher Education,
Innovation, And Workforce Development
4 May 2015

Esteemed members of the committee, good morning.

My name is Dana Rognlie and I am a doctorate candidate and Graduate Teaching Fellow in the Philosophy Department at the University of Oregon. My dissertation, and much of my teaching, takes seriously the staggering prevalence of sexual violence in our campus and broader communities.

The evidence is clear that women, non-white, queer, and non-normatively abled bodies are subject to disproportionate amounts of sexual violence on campus; this violence is often inflicted by a minority of psychologically 'normal' cisgender male offenders, many of whom will be repeat offenders. (I trust the committee is, by now, familiar with the statistics, though I am happy to review them upon request).

It's difficult to decide what is saddest about what we know regarding campus sexual violence: its ubiquity? The victim blaming? Or the failure of many survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders to recognize sex crimes?

Today, I want to speak both in support of SB 759 as well as make some suggested revisions with thoughts towards its implementation. As written, the bill requires institutions of higher learning in Oregon to provide a "protocol to ensure that students who are victims of sexual assault on the grounds or at the facilities of the university or college receive necessary services and assistance." The bill further specifies that a student survivor should be provided a written notification detailing legal and disciplinary options, clarification of privacy limitations at university health centers, and off-campus community services for survivors. This is all laudable and necessary, but it does not go far enough.

In order to "ensure that students who are victims" receive the information, the information needs to be provided to *all* students in a readily accessible manner early in their education careers—regardless of whether they've been assaulted and regardless of whether this assault took place on campus or off (Cleary Act boundaries do not encompass all student-involved sexual assaults).

The effects of trauma are devastating, and potential survivors and their support networks need to know by habit where to locate resources. Sending targeted messaging to survivors may only re-trigger their experience; this mechanism also limits resources to survivors who have already come forward to file a report.

Additionally, though students should be made aware of the privacy limitations at university health centers, this body should work to expand privacy protections. Student survivors regularly come to me, especially in the courses I teach on sex, gender, and sexuality, seeking support from a trusted mentor. The state, however, has severely limited me in this

capacity: not only has the institution failed to provide sufficient practical training, I am also a mandatory reporter. If students cannot confide in their mentors or trust the student-fee subsidized university-counseling center, where do we expect them to go? Skyrocketing tuition and fees make university services the only financially available option for many.

Finally, this body must also work to support prevention efforts, including comprehensive, sustained and intersectional sexual ethics curriculum mandatory for all incoming freshmen.

I thank the committee for their time on this important issue, and I look forward to working with legislators, advocates, and educators on this bill's implementation.

Sincerely,

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