

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OREGON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES BOND PACKAGE
Submitted to the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
By Kerry Naughton, Crime Survivors Program Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice
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Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Read, 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 through appropriate accountability for people who commit crime, 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 investing \$100 million in new bonds for affordable homes for families with low incomes.

Across Oregon, too many families with children are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness because there is a severe and growing lack of affordable housing. This crisis has a particularly serious impact on survivors of violence and their children. Without safe housing, survivors are at greater risk of abuse or homelessness.

The statistics are harrowing: 38 percent of all survivors of domestic violence become homeless at some point in their lives. Experiencing homelessness increases the risk that survivors experience additional violence. One study found that 13 percent of homeless women reported having been raped in the past 12 months, and half of those women had been raped at least twice.

The impact of insufficient safe, affordable housing is felt across Oregon, in both urban and rural areas. A victim advocate in central Oregon recently explained the barriers that survivors faced when trying to escape dangerous environments at home:

"Recently I had a victim come to my office in desperate need of housing for her and her 6 kids. When I told her about the length of the waiting list and the price of other rentals, she knew instantly that she couldn't make it work. She had to make the difficult choice between returning to her abuser or being homeless. Victims of domestic violence should never have to make this choice."

Oregon has an opportunity to create greater safety for survivors, families, and communities. We hope you'll join us in supporting safe, affordable housing through the Oregon Housing and Community Services Bond Package.