



Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

TESTIMONY in Support of HB 3476
Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee
Submitted by: Michele Roland-Schwartz, Executive Director

May 13, 2015

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Kruse, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Michele Roland-Schwartz and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force. The Sexual Assault Task Force is a private, non-profit, non-governmental statewide agency whose mission is to *facilitate and support a victim-centered approach to the prevention of and response to adolescent and adult sexual violence through multi-disciplinary collaboration*. The Task Force is comprised of over 100 appointed Oregonians representing a wide array of local and statewide community partners, including: victim advocates, violence prevention educators, law enforcement, prosecutors, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and other medical professionals, campus practitioners, policy makers, youth, and survivors of sexual violence.

SATF staff and members have developed several key products in an effort to address the issue of campus sexual assault in Oregon, including:

1. A ***Campus Reporting Options***¹ website. The website serves as a confidential source of information about survivor's options on and off campus following a sexual assault.
2. Our ***Campus Prevention Work Group***² previewed primary prevention program models and developed resources to support comprehensive, trauma-informed prevention programming on Oregon's campus communities³. Accompanying the resources is a recommendation, highlighting the importance of campus leadership adopting and proactively implementing pro-social policies that incorporate the broadest range of voices in program planning and implementation.

We stress trauma-informed prevention programing in all implementation because providing safe spaces for survivors to tell their stories is foundational to the prevention of gendered violence. This is why we believe HB 3476 is the most meaningful legislative effort to address the issue of campus sexual assault, and therefore is a priority for the Task Force.

¹ <http://campus.oregonsatf.org/>

² [SATF Recommendations on Prevention Programming for Oregon Colleges and Universities \(http://oregonsatf.org/programs/campus-initiative/\)](http://oregonsatf.org/programs/campus-initiative/)

³ [SATF Recommendations on available programs, including considerations for selection \(http://oregonsatf.org/programs/campus-initiative/\)](http://oregonsatf.org/programs/campus-initiative/)

HB 3476, Increasing Victim Access to Confidential Services by Enacting Victim-Advocate Privilege

Victims are faced with a myriad of sensitive, life-altering decisions that can be overwhelming, time-consuming, and a grueling experience immediately following a sexual assault. In addition to concerns about their health and safety, victims may fear retribution from their peers, their employer, or the systems in which they seek support. Victims may worry about the potential loss of wages or employment, and their ability to remain in school. The added layer of victim blaming, self-blame, and shame compounds any trepidation that a victim feels about who they can disclose to about what happened, or if they disclose at all. When victims do disclose, they may limit what they share, and as a result, responses won't be properly tailored to meet their unique needs.

HB 3476 helps to mitigate the long-term trauma a survivor experiences by offering a safe space whereby a privileged advocate can share accurate information about the sometimes intimidating medical, legal, and support services available to them. The role of advocacy is to provide the full range of options in a safe environment that empowers victims in their decision-making. When survivors are in control, they are more likely to participate in critical services that may increase their safety, health, and path toward healing.

HB 3476 will meaningfully address survivor's critical needs, in particular, survivor's needs on campus. As Oregon's higher education institutions grapple with compliance of Title IX and Clery, HB 3476 will allow them to meet their federal requirements while simultaneously implementing survivor-centered policies and services.

For these reasons, passage of HB 3476 is a priority for the Task Force.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Michele Roland-Schwartz
Executive Director