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Brian Casey
Chief of Police

May 13th, 2015

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

My name is Todd Baltzell and I am currently a sergeant with the Newberg-Dundee Police Department and I am urging your support of HB 3476. I have been in law enforcement for over 21 years with the majority of my career spent investigating person crimes to include sexual assault cases. The more experience I gained investigating these crimes the more I have come to realize that although the criminal justice system is a very important part in the arena of sexual assault, it is not the most important part.

Sexual assault often breaks the soul of its survivors. Apprehending and convicting the offender only affects part of the survivor's recovery and when the survivor is not ready to engage in the jungle of the criminal justice system it can do as much damage to the soul as the sexual assault itself. Survivors need a safe place to interact with the true experts in the field of sexual assault, without the fear of being compromised or thrust into a world they are not ready for.

We need to remember the statistic that only between two and four percent of sexual assault victims report their abuse to law enforcement. According to the CDC one in every four women are victims of sexual assault. We need to recognize that the offenders are creating a society of broken victims and inadvertently the criminal justice system is exacerbating the abuse. I truly believe if there is a safe place for victims of abuse to go to begin to heal and gain strength, before being introduced into the criminal justice system, we will see the number of sexual assault reports to law enforcement grow and ultimately slow the tide of sexual assault.

I believe this bill is a step in the right direction. Thank you for considering my testimony, and for your work on this important legislation.

Sincerely,
Sgt. Todd Baltzell