

TESTIMONY in Support of HB 3476  
Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee  
Submitted by: Carli Rohner, Director of Community Education  
May 13, 2015

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

Thank you for your time today. My name is Carli Rohner, and I am the Director of Community Education at Willamette University. My role in serving our students is to direct primary prevention programs. This means that I create opportunities for our students to learn the skills necessary to identify high-risk precursors to violence in hopes that they will then assist administrators in reducing the number of individuals harmed in our community.

The primary goal of violence prevention is to enable our college and university campuses to be spaces free of violence. The SaVE act requires campuses to implement prevention programs that engage our students in understanding the dynamics of sexual & relationship violence, and assist them in developing into active bystanders. As we help students to develop ownership of their individual roles in violence prevention, myself and other practitioners around the state work alongside our students to do the following:

1. Create environments where the norm is that violence isn't tolerated, and that everyone in our community is expected to do their part
2. To identify high-risk situations, and to intervene if necessary & safe to do so
3. And to understand the resources available on campus to help their friends

A direct effect of these forms of outreach (especially the third item regarding resources) is that the more students are aware of (and trust) our resources, the more likely they are to access them. This trust is of key importance.

Prevention by definition is not reactionary, but good prevention efforts cannot exist in spaces where victims of violence do not feel supported, or are fearful of the consequences of sharing their story.

How we assist victims after violence has occurred directly impacts how truthful they (and their peers) believe our prevention messages to be. As we continue to provide outreach and prevention programs with the message that we care about our campus community, and therefore about ending sexual and relationship violence, we must simultaneously demonstrate that we are willing not just to focus on prevention, but also to continue supporting those who have been (or will be) harmed.

By creating environments where survivors (and the peers that support them) can be given accurate and timely information in a confidential manner, it not only supports victims seeking recovery, it validates our messages of prevention.

It ensures students that, while we as practitioners do our best to ensure that their collegiate environment is safe, we will support them if or when their lives intersect with sexual or relationship violence, and that those who support them will be able to do so in a competent and confidential manner. Metaphorically, prevention and response are two sides of the same coin. Each must equally be strong in order to best serve our students and their needs. This is why HB 3476 is so critically important to the continuation of our prevention efforts in Oregon.

In solidarity,  
Carli Rohner