

TESTIMONY in Support of HB 3476
Submitted to the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Submitted by: Marjorie Trueblood-Gamble, Director of Diversity and Inclusion and Title IX Coordinator

May 13, 2015

Chair Prozanski, and members of the committee,

My name is Marjorie Trueblood-Gamble and I serve as the Director of Diversity and Inclusion and Title IX Coordinator at Southern Oregon University. The testimony I provide in support of HB3476 comes from that lens.

On April 11, 2011 the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) published a letter known as the Dear Colleague Letter, reminding institutions that we have a responsibility to **Stop Prevent and Remedy** acts of sexual harassment and sexual violence that impacts our students and our campus community. In order to do this, institutions must receive reports from victims / survivors. However, we are aware that there are several barriers to reporting. Some of these barriers include the fear of not being believed, the complications in knowing the assailant, fear of retaliation, and distrust of law enforcement. This detail is supported by the OCR revealing that 1 in 5 women will be sexually assaulted in college, but institutions do not receive the number of reports that reflect this ratio.

In pursuit of addressing issues of sexual harassment and sexual violence, our goals should be two-fold - supporting the survivors that come forward **and** addressing the systemic issues that are tied to this form of oppression. HB 3476 is a mechanism that helps us achieve these goals.

At Southern Oregon University, we strive to be both compliant under Title IX and survivor-centered. This means that we take seriously and respond to all reports of sexual misconduct that we receive, and we have designated a confidential advisor to provide support for the survivor. This designation is in addition to the confidential services that victims can receive through our Student Health and Wellness Center. The Confidential Advisor provides substantial support to the victim, in listening to them and providing the multitude of options that are available. Our institution has designated the Confidential Advisor as exempt to Title IX, so the victim can choose the steps and pace of the process. In meeting with the Confidential Advisor, the victim's disclosure does not trigger an automatic Title IX report or process. Due to this designation, we are seeing our reporting numbers go up, which means that our survivors are accessing resources that our campus can provide and feel safe in doing so. We designated the Confidential Advisor in the Spring Term of 2013 and the following chart demonstrates her impact to reporting on campus.

Calendar Year	Number of Reports Received
2011	13
2012	8
2013	20

2014	56
January 2015 -May 12, 2015	35

Historically, Higher Education institutions have been abdicating their responsibility to address sexual assault to places like the Women’s Center. The Dear Colleague Letter served as a reminder that administrations need to confront sexual violence as well. However, this should not take away the confidentiality that advocates have always provided in their support of survivors. Further, having a law granting a privilege status to advocates, will serve to reaffirm the safe space and service that advocates have long provided.

On our campus, our ultimate goal is student success in a safe environment. In order to do this, we need to receive more reports so that we can better address the problem. In addition, we must decrease reporting barriers to receive these reports. I believe that support of this bill provides more entry points for reports and better support of victims.

At SOU, we have found that providing knowledgeable confidential advising has helped us serve our students better. It is possible for colleges and universities to be compliant under Title IX and survivor-centered. By providing students with risk reduction strategies, proactive education, supportive advocates and equitable processes, we can address the issues of sexual harassment and sexual violence more effectively, and I believe that HB3476 is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony for this bill. Please contact me if you have additional questions.

Respectfully,

Marjorie Trueblood-Gamble
Director of Diversity and Inclusion
Title IX Coordinator
Southern Oregon University