



Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

**Testimony in support of HB 2621
House Committee on Judiciary
Submitted by: Michele Roland-Schwartz, Executive Director**

March 7, 2017

Chair Barker and members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Michele Roland-Schwartz, 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 with over 100 multi-disciplinary members who serve as advisors on 1 of 8 subcommittees including: Campus, Criminal Justice, Legislative & Public Policy, Medical-Forensic, Men's Engagement, Offender Management, Prevention Education, and Victim Response.

Our mission is to facilitate and support a collaborative, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence. We accomplish our mission by providing multi-disciplinary training and technical assistance to sexual assault responders in Oregon and nationally.

I submit this written testimony in support of HB 2621 and respectfully request your support for the changes to crime victim compensation, particularly as it serves to increase access to economic and emotional support for victims of sexual violence. In Oregon, where we are second in the nation in rates of sexual violence against women, 1 in 5 women experience sexual assault in their lifetime¹. According to research up to 30% of all sexual assault victims develop post-traumatic stress disorder in their lifetime related to the experience of sexual assault². Without access to basic support and counseling services, that can often be cost prohibitive, the effects of sexual violence can be profound and long term for individuals and our communities. HB 2621 reduces obstacles that victims experience by increasing reporting options and their access to counseling services.

Financial and emotional abuse are also common tactics that perpetrators of sexual violence use and this abuse creates barriers to a safe life for victims³. Many victims' ability to support themselves (and their children) is the determining factor in their

decision to leave a dangerous situation.³ HB 2621 will broaden access to economic stability as victims work to put their lives back together.

Thank you for your ongoing work to address the impact of sexual violence in Oregon, and for taking action by introducing HB2621. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill, and am available for any additional questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,



Michele Roland-Schwartz
Executive Director

1. National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. 2014. www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/nisvs/
2. Kilpatrick, D. G. (2000). The Mental Health Impact of Rape. National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.musc.edu/vawprevention/research/mentalimpact.shtml>
3. www.nnedv.org