



Oregon Coalition

Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

April 5, 2017

To: Sen. Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Rep. Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair

CC: Members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Human Services

Re: Testimony in Support of Temporary Assistance-Domestic Violence Survivors fund (SB 5526)

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV) advocates on behalf of 50+ tribal and community based, non-profit domestic and sexual violence programs. We support your local programs by providing technical assistance, community education, training in prevention, and supporting coordinated emergency medical and legal response to these extremely personal crimes. We strive to ensure that the voices of domestic and sexual violence survivors are heard, and that the experiences of survivors inform both the work we do – and the work you are doing today. Thank you for your willingness to listen to our testimony regarding the importance of restoring the capacity of the Temporary Assistance-Domestic Violence Survivors (TADVS) fund to its original purpose.

Crimes of domestic and sexual assault create more than just physical trauma. They often require a survivor and their dependents to immediately find new housing, file protective orders, take leave of their employment and seek professional mental health support. Oregon is second in the nation in rates of sexual and/or domestic assault. 37% of women and 34% of men in Oregon reported having experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking at some point in their lifetime.

In the mid-1990's the Oregon Legislature responded to these alarming statistics by creating the Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors (TADVS). The fund was originally intended to provide immediate assistance to families in need of quickly protecting themselves. Survivors could apply to a local service provider for a TADVS grant of up to \$1200, to be spent over 90 days, to assist in finding new housing, purchase bus/train/airplane tickets to reach protective family members, change the locks or any other immediate expense needed to secure the safety of the whole family.

TADVS has provided meaningful assistance to more than 10,000 vulnerable Oregon families since its creation. Unfortunately, it's not been adjusted for inflation since its creation and is no longer nearly as impactful as it was originally designed to be. HB 2364 is a long-overdue effort to restore the efficacy of the program. Specifically it:

- **Expands the TADVS grant amount from \$1200 to \$3000 to reflect the dramatic increase in housing costs since 1997.** When established, the \$1200 grant would easily cover first and last month's rent for a family fleeing a violent home. Housing costs, across the state, have more than doubled since 1997 and the grant amount is no longer adequate.
- **Expands the time frame in which to use the TADVS grant money from 90 days to 180 days.** Again, the dramatically changing housing market in Oregon has made the search for alternative housing a more time consuming endeavor. Should the grant not be enough to secure housing, survivors need additional time to identify alternative safety measures. By expanding the time frame in which a survivor may access the funds, we are improving Oregon's ability to support our most vulnerable families.

It should be stressed that these funds do not get paid to the survivors. They are paid directly to the vendors that are enabling each family to protect themselves. It must also be stressed that an increased allocation of funds for TADVS will reduce Child Welfare and other social safety net costs.

Oregon still has a long way to go to adequately support survivors of domestic and sexual assault. HB 3364 strengthen and improves a survivor's ability to take action to protect themselves and their children. For this reason and those listed above, we ask that you please support restoring the efficacy of TADVS within SB 5526.

Thank you,

Niki Terzieff
Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence