

April 6, 2017

Sen. Jackie Winters, Co-Chair

Rep. Duane Stark, Co-Chair

Members of the Public Safety Sub-Committee on Ways & Means

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for Increased Funding in Oregon Domestic & Sexual Violence Services Fund

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My name is Kelle Lawrence Gaddie. I graduated college Summa Cum Laude. I was once working on my Doctorate in Education. I lived with my professional husband in a gorgeous house in well-to-do Lake Oswego. In 2013, I had a healthy, beautiful baby girl. I was a member of the Lake Oswego Mom's club. From the outside, my life looked picture-perfect.

The third day after giving birth to my daughter, I scrubbed the kitchen while my husband watched TV. I did this because he was "irritated" with me because the kitchen was untidy. Afterward, I walked into the TV room where our newborn daughter also lay sleeping to join them and rest, but I asked my husband a question in a way he didn't approve of. He swooped our daughter up while screaming obscenities at me and kicked over the coffee table. I cried and begged him to just give our daughter to me because I had watched him smash computers and other things he held when angry before. Then he grabbed me by the throat, still holding our 3 day-old daughter in his other hand, and hurled my head against the wall hitting it so hard a painting fell off. He held me there by my throat. My toes barely touching the ground. Choking me. When my 18 year-old stepson ran up from downstairs, my husband let go at last and thrust our daughter at me. I held her in shock and terror. I looked at my step son and thought "Please call 911, please call 911." But those words did not come out of my mouth. As they don't for the majority of abused women. *It is more frightening to call the police. Once the police come and go, you are left there alone again with your abuser who now knows you called the police on him.*

The time my husband choked me was not the first time he assaulted me, and it would not be the last. His abuse followed an unfortunately common pattern of increasing the longer we were together and increasing after the birth of our daughter. His abuse was not only physical. His emotional and/or psychological abuse happened regularly increasing to daily in the last two years we were together. The emotional and physical abuse took place increasingly in front of our daughter. This is what finally gave me the strength to leave my husband, my abuser. Seeing the impact his abuse was having on her, and seeing his abusive behavior begin to be directed toward her also.

I consider myself lucky in that when I left had saved some money to pay a lawyer, and I had a friend willing to take my daughter and me in for 6 months. Prior to this I had called the **Call to**

**Safety Help Line** so many times, I had my own advocacy worker there. It took me 2 years to get up enough nerve to fill out a restraining order. A final deciding factor was when I found out I could go to **A Safe Place** in Clackamas County, part of **Clackamas Women's Services** and get free help filling out the form and talk to the judge via video rather than having to be at the courthouse, which was very intimidating. After I left my husband, I went almost immediately to **The Gateway Center** and found free trauma counseling for my daughter and me through Impact NW. Their advocacy proved to be crucial to our healing and to helping me keep my daughter safe around visits with her abusive father. The Gateway Center provided clothes when we ran out of money and resources to find food. My husband is rich, but as I write this one year and seven months after leaving my husband, I will get my first child support payment this week. My financial privilege ended quickly after leaving, and knowing that would happen was something my abuser counted on.

Abuse and control don't stop once a woman leaves. Some abusers stalk and threaten the survivor. Some abusers intimidate and control through attorneys and courts. Many abusers control by withholding child support or other money awarded by the court. Most abusers use the children to manipulate or intimidate, and statistically 60 percent of men who abuse their intimate partners will abuse their children. **ODSVS funding helps women and children with every step of the complicated journey of escaping, surviving, maneuvering the legal system, custody and visitation, and healing.** The services provided are desperately needed by too many women and children in Oregon. I just finished a 10-week group with a component for my daughter through **Bradley Angle House** called Trauma, Resiliency, and Empowerment Parenting. Friends have commented how much more I am smiling after this group. My daughter loved it too. As at Impact NW, she got to meet kids with experiences like hers. I plan to join another group to continue our healing. These groups are a lifeline.

Please help us. Help us help our children. And by doing so, help us create a healthier Oregon citizenship down the road.

Please increase the funding for ODSVS. The need is enormous. These programs save lives, provide shelter, give hope, teach paths to healing, provide safety plans and safety nets.

Kelle Lawrence Gaddie