



Melissa Erlbaum, MPA  
Executive Director

April 23, 2017  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
**Re: Support for HB 2972**

Chair Prozanski and Vice-Chair Thatcher and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Melissa Erlbaum, and I am the executive director of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), a community-based non-profit agency that has supported survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and elder abuse on their pathways to safety and stability for over 30 years.

As a professional who has worked in this field for over 20 years, I can tell you that survivors of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking and domestic violence must have agency over how they participate the process of holding offenders accountable. This type of violence targets the very core of the human experience by exerting violent and abusive control over another person. This experience is incredibly traumatizing, and a key component to a survivor's recovery is their ability to determine if, when, and how to talk about an event.

The practice of removing the survivor's ability to make critical decisions about their own recovery exposes them to an administrative process that is re-traumatizing, further compounding the ability to heal. They are not typically a party in such proceedings, and should such proceedings happen against the victim's will it violates the victim's agency in a significant way.

HB 2972 is a critical step in protecting survivors' rights and I urge you to vote yes and demonstrate to survivors that we understand the impact of trauma, that we honor their right to justice and support their path of healing.

Sincerely,

Melissa Erlbaum, MPA  
Executive Director



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*Finding a Path Forward to Safety, Justice and Healing*  
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