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Testimony of Arthur Towers
In Support of HB 2972-A
Before the
Senate Committee on Judiciary
April 24, 2017

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2972-A. This bill is an important piece of legislation to protect victims' rights.

Survivors of sexual assault face severe trauma. Recovery may include battling back against depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, guilt, and other mental health issues. This can be a lifelong struggle.

Protecting these victims from compulsory involvement in a campus disciplinary hearing is an important step forward in treating these victims humanely, and in putting their recovery first.

The Oregon Trial Lawyers Association is working on several projects this session to protect and restore the rights of victims of sexual assault. Our members fight for victims to make sure they can be compensated for the trauma and injury they have experienced.

There is one other important reason to enact this law. Victims who are compelled to come forward in a student disciplinary hearing may be doing so without legal counsel. They may inadvertently say something in the hearing that harms their civil case to hold either the perpetrator accountable or to hold an institution accountable for allowing the abuse to happen.

It is conceivable that the institution compelling victim participation in a student disciplinary hearing may have some culpability in the circumstances around the assault.

We applaud the sponsors for bringing this bill forward, and urge that the committee move the bill to the floor with a do pass recommendation.