



Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

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

May 4, 2017

Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, I submit this **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.

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.

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 supporting HB2621.