

Chair Roblan, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the Committee,

This is a story about an advocate born and raised in Oregon.

The daughter of 2 immigrants, my parents divorced when I was very young, and my single mom struggled to find affordable housing and childcare for 2 while working fulltime.

I learned early on that with very little support established in America, it would be almost required for to go to college to be able to get a good job, buy a house, live the American dream.

So after a childhood spent mainly in a conservative rural town (Newberg, OR) I ventured off to Oregon State University.

I know SB318 is for k-12 and community colleges but my story is still important.

My story starts her second year of college.

It was my first ever boyfriend and though it wasn't great, I finally felt wanted. To be honest I dealt with horrible things behind closed doors because I didn't know any better... Maybe this was what relationships were?

Sexual assaults within the relationship weren't uncommon, slapping and rude comments were normal, cooking and cleaning and becoming almost a care giver and mother to my partner became a way of life.

Depression set in, my health deteriorated, sI was pulled away and isolated from friends and family- all moments were spent making him happy.

Until one day I stepped back and realized what I was deep into... I planned the break-up, I personally safety planned, and I did it.

I did it.

It didn't take long for the 10-20 missed calls and texts a day to take their toll. He had become my stalker and I was extremely scared, embarrassed, alone at that point.

During all of this, it was my little secret. I had joined the Residence Hall Association (RHA) at Oregon State and my life was becoming very public as I was reaching for my goals... My meetings were posted across campus and my schedule could not be hidden.

So I finally broke down and told my RHA director. Those first steps are the hardest I will ever face- but my director's response was priceless. She believed me, she let me safety plan what worked for me, she let her door always be open.

Just that was powerful. Empowering.

Ultimately I ended up moving states, changing phone numbers, going underground as much as she could. It took her stalker almost 3 years to finally let her go...

My RHA director had been trained by a woman- Carrie Giese- a woman at Oregon State who had just decided to find grants and create a position like hers within our student health department. I was connected to Carrie early on in her safety planning journey, but it still took me half a year to be healthy enough to step up to the plate.

I became a peer health educator on campus, I gave presentations with my peers, to ROTC, to different OSU sports teams, to OSU university classes, so others like me knew of resources, support, but most importantly-- that they were not alone.

Stalking, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence is normal to college people and it's a sad reality that many face it and then just drop out of college... that they give up on their hope and dreams...

I changed her major from mathematics to women studies and healed from what I had faced.

I graduated in 2008 with my bachelors and went on to start a position of advocacy at Henderson House in McMinnville, OR. I did Peace Corps and served her country abroad. I came back and worked for Call to Safety (formerly the Portland Women's Crisis Line) and then found a position as the Domestic Violence Program Coordinator for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

I has bought a house, have completed paying off my student loans, I am living my American dream...

But positions like Carrie, people like Carrie that find those grants because they see those needs, the funding should just be there. The stats speak for themselves that positions like hers are critical. The direct training she gave to staff on campus, to my RHA director in my time of need...

Carrie saved my life, she empowered me to be the brave survivor I am and **I fully support the 1.5 FTE positions needed** to create awareness, safety and a future for our children and those seeking higher education.

Thank you.