



Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

Testimony in support of SB 318

Senate Committee on Education

Submitted by: Michele Roland-Schwartz, Executive Director

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

On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, I submit this testimony in **support of SB 318**, which will strengthen state-level violence prevention efforts in K-12, and improve community college response by establishing critical staffing at the Oregon Department of Education.

SB 318 exemplifies our mission to support a collaborative, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence in Oregon. With over 100 multi-disciplinary members who serve as advisors to the Task Force¹, we aim to prevent sexual violence from happening in the first place, while simultaneously improving our response efforts to mitigate trauma and ensure the safety and security of all victims.

The overarching goal of SB 318 is to *create healthy communities for Oregonians, free from bullying, harassment, and acts of violence*. Preventing violence before it begins requires us to invest in and support youth identifying and developing healthy relationships. Improving our response to violence in educational settings requires that we provide trauma-informed interventions, provided by trustworthy adults who are able to ensure students' rights and needs are met.

National research indicates that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys experience sexual abuse before age 18². The risk of violence is represented not just in K-12, but also through a students' academic career, leading into college. Of the nearly 350,000 students enrolled in one of Oregon's 17 community colleges, 1 in 5³ of women will experience sexual violence while they are enrolled in

¹ SATF members serve on 1 of 8 subcommittees, including: Campus, Criminal Justice, Legislative & Public Policy, Medical-Forensic, Men's Engagement, Offender Management, Prevention & Education, and Victim Response. Members are appointed by the Oregon Attorney General, although SATF is a statewide nonprofit with 501(c) 3 status.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2005). *Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: Data and Statistics*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace/prevalence.htm>

³ White House Task Force. (2014). *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault*. http://www.changingourcampus.org/resources/not-alone/WH_Task_Force_First_Report.pdf

school. Additionally, 1 in 71 men will experience sexual violence in their lifetime⁴. The long-term negative impacts of violence include: chronic disease, poor mental health outcomes, risk of suicide, addiction, and difficulty securing and establishing employment, housing, and safety. The widespread impact of trauma on Oregon's students impacts their ability to fully engage in academic life, resulting in chronic absenteeism, poor academic results, and drop out rates. Oregon has an excellent foundation upon which to build successful violence prevention and response, however, schools across Oregon currently lack the infrastructure, technical assistance, and support to fully implement effective prevention and response services.

SB 318 will strengthen our statewide infrastructure to prevent and respond to sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking by fully funding two positions at the Oregon Department of Education:

- *Violence Prevention Specialist* (.5FTE) will increase a current position at ODE to full-time, supporting prevention efforts for youth in K-12.
- *Title IX Specialist* (1FTE) will provide technical assistance and support to Oregon's K-12 and community colleges, addressing interpersonal violence (sexual, domestic, and dating violence, and stalking).

The *Violence Prevention Specialist* and *Title IX Specialist* will weave prevention and response efforts, creating a bridge between Oregon's secondary schools and community colleges. SB 318 is a cost-effective, pro-active approach that will leverage the success of bipartisan accomplishments passed in previous sessions, including the Healthy Teen Relationship Act (HB 4007 of 2012), Erin's Law (SB 856 2015), Coordinated Student Success Act (HB 4031 of 2016), Campus Sexual Assault (SB 759 2015), and Advocate Privilege (HB 3476 2015), while also responding to federal Title IX and Clery Act mandates.

Passage of SB 318 will establish the support necessary to build healthier, safer communities where Oregon students will thrive and reach their full potential. For these reasons, we urge your support.

Respectfully submitted,



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Executive Director

⁴ National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (2015). *Statistics About Sexual Violence*.
http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_factsheet_media-packet_statistics-about-sexual-violence_0.pdf