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**Senate Education Committee
Testimony in Support of SB 318
February 16, 2017**

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

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center, I submit this testimony in support of SB 318, which would establish critical staffing at the Oregon Department of Education to support secondary schools and community colleges in their responsibilities to implement state and federal inter-personal violence prevention and victim support requirements.

The Oregon Law Center (OLC) is a non-profit law firm whose mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. Domestic and sexual violence greatly contribute to the vulnerability of our clients, and further trap them in poverty and crisis. OLC is committed to supporting the coordinated community response necessary to help prevent this violence, and to helping victims in crisis move towards the safety and stability they need for recovery.

OLC supports SB 318 because it is a practical and cost-effective means of supporting our educational institutions in implementing strategies to address the critical need for violence prevention and support for our youth and college-aged populations. This is a priority goal for the following reasons:

- Young people experience high rates of dating violence and sexual assault. Our young people, teens as well as college-age adults, are at greatest risk of abuse. Young people aged 12-19 experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault in our country.¹ More than 5% of women on college campuses (approximately 300,000 women) experience rape or attempted rape every year². This is a problem that affects boys as well as girls: One in ten high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- The negative ramifications of suffering abuse as a young adult are profound. Young people who are victims are more likely than their non-abused peers to smoke, use drugs, engage in risky sexual behaviors, and attempt or consider suicide.³ Victims are more

¹ Truman, Jennifer and Rand, Michael. 2010. *Criminal Victimization, 2009*. U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv09.pdf>.

² Kilpatrick, Resnick, Riggiero, Conoscenti, & McCauley, 2007; American College Health Association, 2013. <http://www.oneinfourusa.org/statistics.php>

³ Silverman, J, Raj A, et al. 2001. Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality. *JAMA*. 286:572-579. Available at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/286/5/572>.

likely to do poorly in school, or to skip school entirely because they feel unsafe. The severity of adult intimate partner violence is often greater in cases where the pattern of abuse was established in adolescence.

- In recognition of the importance of the role that schools and campuses have in responding to and preventing sexual violence, the Oregon Legislature has successfully passed bipartisan legislation designed to address these issues. Examples include the Healthy Teen Relationship Act (HB 4077 of 2012), Coordinated Student Success Act (HB 4031 of 2016), Campus Sexual Assault (SB 759 2015), and Advocate Privilege (HB 3476 2015). The federal government has also acted on these issues, and campus response and prevention is covered under Title IX of the federal Education Amendments of 1972⁴. While these policy laws have created excellent standards, schools across Oregon currently lack the infrastructure, technical assistance, and support to fully implement these policies.

The Violence Prevention Specialist and Title IX specialist established by SB 318 would assist Oregon's secondary schools and community colleges with navigating their federal and state mandates. Passage of this bill will help actualize the prevention of domestic and sexual violence in our schools and against our young people. SB 318 is an important connector in the road map for our state's future health. For these reasons, we urge support.

Thank you sincerely for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sybil Hebb
Oregon Law Center

⁴ 20 U.S.C. Section 1682 et seq, 1972.