



Melissa Erlbaum, MPA
Executive Director

February 16, 2017
Senate Committee on Education
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for SB 318

Dear Senate Committee on Education Chair Senator Arnie Roblan and Committee Members:

As the Executive Director of Clackamas Women's Services, I strongly support SB 318, which will help strengthen state-level violence prevention efforts in K-12 and improve the community college response.

For over 30 years, Clackamas Women's Services (CWS) has supported survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and elder abuse on their pathways to safety and stability. Additionally, CWS is currently the only agency specifically offering sexual and dating violence prevention programming to schools across Clackamas County, with our Violence Prevention team delivering a ten-module violence-prevention curriculum to thousands of students in 16 schools. This work has highlighted the fact that the impacts of domestic and sexual violence are both powerful and far-reaching; there are virtually no youth who are left untouched by it, either directly or indirectly.

Data from the Oregon Health Authority's 2015 Healthy Teen Survey further illustrate the need for increased violence prevention supports. These findings include that in Clackamas County alone, 13% of 8th graders reported giving in to "sexual activity when they didn't want to because of pressure," and 5.8% identified as having been "physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they didn't want to." Further, 4.6% of adolescents surveyed reported experiencing physical violence at the hands of a dating partner and 23.5% at the hands of an adult.

In consideration of the prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault in our communities and larger state, as well as its deleterious impact on our youth, I urge you to support SB 318. The funding of the Violence Prevention Specialist and Title IX Specialist positions at the Oregon Department of Education are critical to not only supporting CWS' violence prevention efforts, but also to ensuring the health and safety of our students, schools, and communities.

Thank you for consideration and your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Melissa Erlbaum".

Melissa Erlbaum, MPA
Executive Director