

February 1, 2019

To: Chair Fagan, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Senate Housing Committee

Re: Support for SB 608

The Center for Hope & Safety is urging your support of SB 608, which **will make a difference for the constituents in your districts facing domestic violence, stalking and human trafficking**. The vast majority of victims rent their homes and the protections this bill provides against no-cause evictions and extreme rent increases will make it possible for survivors to have the stability they need to begin rebuilding their lives free of violence.

Center for **HOPE & SAFETY**



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

The Center for Hope & Safety has been providing services to adults and children impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking for 45 years. We have seen firsthand the critical difference fair, stable, affordable and low-income housing makes for the thousands of victims and survivors we work with each year. In addition, **the volatility of Oregon's rental market has more than doubled the amount of time victims are staying in our shelter**. This reduces the availability of shelter beds for victims in need in our community and state.

The current housing market is putting vulnerable families in Oregon in danger. This is especially evident with women and children affected by violence. Many of the survivors we serve are at risk of extreme rent increases, and no cause evictions, that may lead to no viable options for safe housing for them and their children.

The Center for Hope & Safety worked with a woman (while not her real name, we will call her Sarah) who had worked hard to escape an abusive husband. **Sarah and her daughter had not been allowed to work or have any access to basic needs, including food.** Sarah knew she needed to get away from her abuser or face long-term health and safety consequences for her daughter and herself. Sarah not only stood up in court to face her abuser, she went out and secured a job and an apartment. **Within six months Sarah's rent was raised twice, one time by \$300 a month.** Their family was on the brink of homelessness after working so hard to create a new stable home environment.

Please vote yes on SB 608 so victims in Oregon do not face the impossible choice of living with an abusive partner or living in an affordable and safe home. Thank you for your consideration of my comments and your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Jayne Downing
Executive Director

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because everyone deserves a life free of violence