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**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2393
Before the House Judiciary Committee**

February 20th, 2019

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2393, which would remove loopholes in prior legislation meant to ensure protection for victims of “revenge porn,” the distribution of an intimate image of another person without their consent. The bill would also add protection for survivors and accountability for perpetrators by allowing a civil action for damages incurred as a result of this crime. We greatly appreciate the work of our Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and staff in bringing this bill forward.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. A significant number of our clients come to us for help as they are struggling to escape or recover from domestic or sexual violence. Domestic and sexual violence are serious public health and safety issues in our state. Victims suffer great psychological, emotional, and physical trauma, which have long-term impact on their lives. 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 in the aftermath of crime.

When a person is subjected to the non-consensual public dissemination of intimate images, there is great harm inflicted. This is an extreme violation of privacy and trust, and is often behavior that is part of an existing pattern (or a precursor to a future pattern) of abuse, manipulation, stalking, harassment, abuse, or sexual violence. Victims of this behavior suffer embarrassment, fear, depression, disruption of job or school activities, and other significant and life-altering damages.

For these reasons, the Oregon Law Center was supportive of the 2015 legislation. Since that time, as methods and practices have morphed with the development of new technologies, some loopholes have become evident. It is now clear that email, texts, and other methods of communication are routinely used in cases that the law was designed to address, but is unable to address due to terminology used in the statute. HB 2393 updates our law to close loopholes preventing accountability for abusers who use these newer and more common methods of dissemination.

In addition, after examining Oregon's statute and comparing it with protections that exist in other states, it became clear that our statute lacked a protection that victim advocates in other states have found helpful. Survivors of the crime of non-consensual dissemination of an intimate image often suffer lingering damages. A civil cause of action can be a means of accessing greater compensation for injuries suffered, and is a means of ensuring greater accountability. HB 2393 will provide a civil cause of action for damages caused by this crime. This is in keeping with other states' responses to abusive dissemination of intimate images, and will help ensure that survivors get the services they need to recover from this crime.

For these reasons, we urge support of this bill, and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sybil Hebb