

03/12/2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

RE: Support for increasing the Oregon Domestic & Sexual Violence Services Fund

Chair Winters, Co-Chair Piluso and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety:

My name is Kori Madeza and I am a survivor of domestic violence with small children involved. Because of this, I am a member of A Safe Place Family Justice Center for Clackamas County Voices Committee. This committee focuses on helping those who are in a domestic violence situation. We strive to reach out to others and help where we can. I believe that more funding is needed to this great cause because, whether we all would like to admit it or not, domestic violence is everywhere. According information found from "Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women", in 2017, 8,000 domestic violence victims were denied requests because of the lack of funding for emergency shelters. A Safe Place helped me when I needed it, so it would be beneficial for others to receive the same help.

In 2015, when my children were four and five years old, after many instances of violence from their father, I was the victim of strangulation (which is now a felony). Although there were other moments of vulnerability (he tried to take me to the desert and threatened to kill me, has punched me, kicked me, told me I was worthless), this was the one that stands out the most. After being upset that I wouldn't give him money for his next high, because my children's expenses were more important to me, I found myself being held down by him, his hands firmly choking the air out of me. My five-year-old daughter, terrified that I would be harmed, let our dog in the room so she would protect me. She bit him, which gave me a chance to catch my breath. After being told this was MY FAULT, he finally left and this was my chance to call my parents to help me. As soon as my parents helped me out of this situation, we went to A Safe Place in Oregon City to see what could be done. Nichelle, without hesitation, happily spent her time writing out a restraining order for me. I was confused, scared and more than anything, upset that I let my children witness their father strangle me. A Safe Place granted me a hotel, making sure no one would be able to find me. None of this would have been possible without the help of A Safe Place. And now, I attend Voices meetings so I can help others. My children attend art classes that target kids involved in traumatic experiences. None of this is possible without the help from A Safe Place Family Justice Center for Clackamas County.

I urge you to support a \$10 million increase to the Oregon Domestic & Sexual Violence Services Fund. I may have had a positive outcome from their services. However, those who they can't help because of limited funding might not be so lucky. Please help others, especially children, seek a safe and comfortable living situation. My kids are thriving because of the help that A Safe Place has given me. Please help give other children those same results.

Sincerely,

Kori Madeza

A Safe Place Family Justice Center for Clackamas County Voices Committee Member