



March 24, 2019

Dear Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Emerj-SafeNow, a nonprofit that provides prevention education and resources to vulnerable communities and populations in Portland and Multnomah County. We work in schools, community centers and transitional housing locations providing skills and resources at little to no cost for the participants. I am writing to ask you to support HB2657 so that organizations like ours can receive a steady source of funding to continue doing this important work.

Over the past year, we have provided training and skills to over 1,500 children, teens and adults. Almost all of our work has been funded by small grants from individual schools or small grants administered through Multnomah County. Some of our programs are offered at an hourly fee with a sliding scale.

One small grant from Rosa Parks School enabled us to do 20 weeks of violence prevention training. This grant enabled us to collaborative provide education for the entire 4th and 5th grades. Rosa Parks is a year-round inner-city school that has over 80 percent of its students receiving free and reduced lunch. Our programming was culturally specific and focused on providing gender equity and healthy relationships education, assertiveness and boundary training. We emphasize the importance of self-care and supportive adults and the power of positive thinking and self-worth to promote healthy beliefs and norms.

Although our program was well received and fully supported by the school district, administration and teachers, we were forced to discontinue this work due to lack of funding. In fact, our programming is currently on hold as we are forced to focus on fundraising and find funding sources.

I have included a link to a video we made at Rosa Parks School. It gives you some insight into the important work that we are doing in Portland, this work needs to be happening all over the state. Video [EMERJ-SafeNow](#)

I have been working to end sexual violence for over ten years as the Executive Director of EMERJ but also in my position as the former GirlStrength Director for the Portland Police Bureau, I know we must address the root causes of violence, oppression and increase sexuality education to shift community and social norms around violence and gendered violence. We must work in collaboration with schools, school districts, teachers, counsellors and communities to provide skills and resources in order to address harmful norms, stereotypes and messages that promote sexual violence.

Without a dedicated source of funding, sexual and domestic violence programs such as ours are caught in the bind of constantly having to respond to crises without having resources to be preemptive and stop violence before it occurs. We, and other organizations in Oregon, need a steady stream of funding to provide comprehensive programming, skills and resources.

On behalf of EMERJ-SafeNow, I ask you all to vote YES and support HB2657. This funding is critical for the wellbeing and safety of our children and communities. Violence is preventable and if we can reduce and prevent it from occurring, we ultimately reduce long term financial costs and harm inflicted on our children, communities and state services. I challenge you all to be leaders in ending sexual violence in Oregon. Support this bill.

Sincerely,

C. Haycraft

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