



**Center Against
Rape and
Domestic Violence**

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March 25, 2019

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

Attention: Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to support **SB 5512**. I am the Executive Director of the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence, a non-profit organization providing services to domestic and sexual violence survivors in Linn and Benton Counties.

Leaving an abusive relationship is not an easy process. Individuals and families are displaced from their homes in order to seek safety. We provide emergency shelter and support services for survivors of domestic violence.

Our agency works daily to connect clients to low income housing and make referrals to the local community action agency to access financial assistance for housing and utilities. As advocates for our clients, we use every resource available to help clients find safe housing and stability in a home. No one deserves to be unsafe in their home and the work we do is to help clients not have to choose between safe, affordable and stable housing and abusive relationship.

This year, we have partnered with our community action agency to refer clients to access EHA funds. The clients are in a job skills program, receive case management from our organization and are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to domestic violence or sexual assault. This partnership and program has helped our agency connect families to a program that will help set them up for success at the conclusion of the financial assistance. The program gives the client time to complete the job skills program, gain employment with their newly acquired skills and save funds for when the program is no longer supporting their family. The families are set up for success in our community and do not have the pressure to return to an

P.O. Box 914
Corvallis, OR 97339
Admin: (541) 758-0219
Fax: (541) 758-8458
Crisis & Support Line:
(541) 754-0110
(800) 927-0197

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abusive partner because they are not able to make the rent at their new, safe home.

Victims of domestic violence often return to their abusers if they cannot find housing alternatives for themselves and their children.

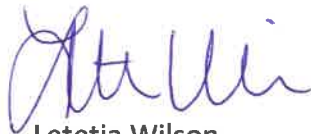
I am in support of SB 5512 because survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault need to have support systems to prevent them from experiencing homelessness or reduce the time they are in a homeless shelter, like the one my agency operates. Investing in the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program, the DV Housing Navigator Program will help reduce family and child homelessness rates and help keep families safe from abusers.

Please support SB 5512, specifically:

- \$50 million in on-going funds for the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program;
- \$20.5 Million to support preventing and ending homelessness specifically for children and families;
- \$5 million for the DV Housing Navigator Program

These programs will help ensure that survivors don't have to choose between housing and safety for themselves and their children.

Sincerely,



Letetia Wilson
Executive Director