

In support of HB 5512

Funding for Emergency Housing Assistance and State Homeless Assistance Program and Domestic & Sexual Violence Housing Navigators

Jayne Downing, Executive Director

Attention: Co-Chairs Manning, Co-Chair Gomber, and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee of Transportation and Economic Development:

My name is Jayne Downing, and for the last 21 years I have been the Executive Director of the Center for Hope & Safety (CHS). CHS serves thousands of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion and Polk Counties. CHS provides a 24-hour crisis line, emergency confidential shelter, emergency transportation, support groups, intensive case management, and many more supportive services to thousands of victims and survivors each year.

Last year alone, our program had more than 26,000 contacts. **Our shelter has 20 beds, but at times we have had to place families on cots and in sleeping bags to not turn unsafe families away! We have “stretched” shelter capacity to make space for up to 32 children and adults at one time!**

Our staff works hard to keep survivors from bouncing from shelter to shelter and to find transitional and permanent housing for vulnerable families. **The length of stay in our shelter has tripled over the last five years, primarily due the lack of housing in our community.** The State Homeless Assistance Program funds we currently receive, \$20,000 a year, allow us to work with victims to start their lives over free of violence. With increased State Housing and Emergency Housing Assistance funding, our program would be able to serve more children and adults that are fleeing domestic violence and human trafficking in our community. In addition to the SHAP and EHA funds, the addition of a Housing Navigator under HB 5512 would allow us to work with survivors of violence to identify and secure housing once they leave our shelter. **If our program could add a Housing Navigator to our staff, it would allow for highly-trained advocate to focus their energies on assisting survivors with filling out paperwork, accompany them to meet with landlords, and work through any barriers to gaining and maintaining long-term stable housing.**

Together, an increase in the State Housing Assistance Program, Emergency Housing Assistance, and the addition of Housing Navigators in domestic and sexual violence programs, would increase the safety net for some of the most vulnerable families in Oregon. The increases sought under HB 5512, would allow us to strengthen and expand the services our program, and other shelter programs, provide to those that are homeless or at risk of homelessness in our community.

We know you are all keenly aware of the need for shelter and housing in Oregon and that you face challenges for where to place finite resources. We hope HB 5512 will be one of the places you decide is critical for Oregon families. Thank you for all your efforts to make our state a safe and vibrant place to live!

Center for HOPE & SAFETY



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

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because everyone deserves a life free of violence