

March 27, 2019

Re: Letter in support of HB 2657-2  
Comprehensive Violence Prevention

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

My name is Jayne Downing, and I am the Executive Director of the Center for Hope & Safety (CHS). I am writing to encourage your support for HB 2657-2, which will provide comprehensive violence prevention funding in Oregon.

# Center for HOPE & SAFETY



*Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service*

CHS serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion and Polk Counties. Last year, we had more than 26,000 contacts to our program. Last year alone, thousands of individuals walked into our Advocacy Office in downtown Salem to receive crisis intervention, safety planning, assistance with protection orders, attend support groups, and receive many other supportive services.

**The Center for Hope & Safety has no funding to carry out prevention work.** However, we understand how critical prevention work is and so we provide trainings in middle and high schools in Marion County on healthy relationships, anti-oppression work, and bystander intervention skills regarding teen dating violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and pornography. The CHS bilingual Youth Advocate trains between 3,000-4,000 middle and high school students every year.

Dedicated funding for prevention work would allow us to expand services to all the schools we are not able to reach, as there are always many more requests for training than we are able to provide within our limited budget. We know prevention work is critical to ultimately allow us to eliminate interpersonal violence in our communities. Until we fully address the root causes of violence and shift community norms, we will continue to see the damaging outcomes of interpersonal violence throughout Oregon.

**As a crisis intervention agency, we often say, "We work every day to put ourselves out of a job!"** One of the best ways to see this goal become a reality is to have dedicated prevention funding to build a strong infrastructure within sexual assault and domestic violence programs.

We hope you will support this important step in systemically addressing sexual and domestic violence in Oregon and support HB 2657-2.

Thank you for your consideration and all the ways you work to make Oregon a wonderful and truly safe place to live.

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*because everyone deserves a life free of violence*