



256 Warner Milne Road, Oregon City, OR 97045  
(503) 655-8600 | www.cwsor.org

March 28, 2019

Re: HB 2657-2-Support

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger and members of the Committee,

I am the executive director of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), a community-based non-profit that provides critical services — including emergency and confidential shelter and housing program, a 24/7 crisis line, children's program, mental health counseling, support groups, legal advocacy, prevention and community education — to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, elder abuse, stalking and human trafficking. **On behalf of CWS and the vulnerable families, individuals and children we serve, and our valued employees I urged you to support HB 2657-2.**

Currently, CWS provides a 10-week violence prevention curriculum, with eight additional optional lessons, in twenty-two different schools, **servicing over 5,600 students** annually. This year we turned away five schools, a number that continues to grow each year.

Our program is funded primarily through private donations and grants (80%). These funds are time-limited and unpredictable. However, our dedication to this effort has enabled us to use this funding to build a solid program over the past seven years. The investment of these private donations has provided us the opportunity to show that the program has results. Now it is time for the State to make an investment so that students across the state can have access to violence prevention education.

There are many competing needs for funding and we appreciate your thoughtful attention to each of them. We are asking for a modest funding stream that will have exponential benefits. If we want to end the epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault in Oregon we must start here. There is a very high return on investment by providing violence prevention through community-based organizations and Tribal entities with expertise in this field.

I encourage you to take the time to read through the submitted written testimony, in particular from the students and violence prevention educators. It will provide you with a deeper understanding of the program beyond the statistics and other outcome data.

Violence is preventable and we urge you to support HB 2657 so that we can work together to end this public health crisis and crime epidemic in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Erlbaum', is written over the typed name.

Melissa Erlbaum, MPA  
Executive Director