



Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

Testimony in support of HB2657-2 House Judiciary Committee March 29, 2019

Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF), I am pleased to provide testimony in support of our priority bill, HB2657-2.

The Sexual Assault Task Force is a private, non-profit, non-governmental statewide agency with over 100 multi-disciplinary members appointed by Attorney General Rosenblum. Members serve as advisors on 1 of 8 subcommittees including: Advocacy Response, Campus, Criminal Justice, Legislative & Public Policy, Medical-Forensic, Men's Engagement, Offender Management, and Prevention and Education.

Our mission is to advance a multi-disciplinary, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence in Oregon. Our goal is to prevent sexual violence from happening in the first place, while simultaneously improving our response efforts to mitigate trauma and ensure the safety and security of all victims.

What HB2657-2 Does

HB2657-2 will establish a dedicated funding stream for comprehensive violence prevention education in K-12 and other community settings.

- \$3 million in funding would be administered by the Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) at the Oregon Department of Justice, in collaboration and consultation with the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force.
- Funding would be available via a competitive grant process that CVSSD has the unique and established infrastructure to support and implement.
- Funding would be eligible for community-based nonprofit, culturally specific¹, and tribal government domestic and sexual violence programs, many of whom CVSSD already provides grant funding to support their intervention and crisis response efforts. We project that approximately 20-25 programs would be funded through this dedicated prevention funding stream.

SATF's Role in Implementing HB2657-2

SATF's Prevention Program² convenes statewide partners to advance comprehensive violence prevention efforts in Oregon. Since 2005, SATF has administered the *Rape*

¹ Culturally specific programs are created by and for specific cultural communities with an emphasis on the voices and experiences of the community.

² <http://oregonsatf.org/programs/prevention/>

*Prevention and Education (RPE)*³ Grant program, passed from the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* to the *Oregon Health Authority (OHA)* (CDC distributes RPE funding to all states and several territories in the US). OHA contracts with AGSATF at \$264,718/year to administer RPE funding. We grant 80% of the funding we receive to four domestic and sexual violence programs⁴ via a competitive grant process, at approximately \$53K/year.

RPE is the largest and one of the very few prevention funding streams in Oregon. The majority of other funding sources that sexual and domestic violence programs receive prohibits the use of funds toward implementation of prevention activities (e.g. VOCA will not allow prevention activities⁵). Programs otherwise rely on private foundations and community-fundraising to support their prevention education efforts or have no funding at all.

As members of various state level advisory boards, SATF has heard time and time again that culturally specific and tribal governmental programs have historically been underfunded and given limited resources to support their response and crisis intervention services. RPE, for example, has federal restrictions that limit the ability of Tribes to utilize RPE funding - this is why HB2657-2 explicitly names culturally-specific and tribal government programs to ensure they are included among the programs who are eligible to receive funds, and that in addition to equity in allocation of funding, that they lead their prevention efforts to reflect their own expertise and lived experiences.

If HB2675 passes, SATF is committed to supporting the expansion of violence prevention efforts by offering technical assistance, training, and ongoing support of prevention programs across our state who would receive dedicated prevention funding, in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Justice and by listening to and following the leadership and lived experiences of survivors, preventionists, educators, youth, parents, and communities implementing comprehensive violence prevention activities.

Investing Prevention Funding for Community-Based Nonprofits, Culturally Specific and Tribal Government Programs Focused on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Violence is preventable. It is not inevitable.

While we have made many positive strides to improve our prevention and response efforts in Oregon, our communities lack the resources to fully implement and sustain effective violence prevention education. Without a dedicated source of funding, sexual and domestic violence programs and their allies are caught in the bind of constantly having to respond to crises without having resources to stop it before it occurs.

³ <http://oregonsatf.org/programs/prevention/rape-prevention-and-education/>

⁴ These programs include: El Programa Hispano Catolico, Haven in the Dalles, Women's Crisis Support Team, and Clackamas Women's Services. These programs serve 7 counties, including Wasco, Gilliam, Wheeler, Sherman, Josephine, Clackamas, and Multnomah - specifically East, county.

⁵ http://navaa.org/members/interactiveSite/html/ch04/ch04_page025.html

Investing in violence prevention education not only stops violence before it occurs, it reduces the burden that violence has on our public safety and public health systems, including our criminal justice, healthcare, and crisis response services.

Community-based non-profit, culturally specific, and tribal government sexual and domestic violence programs are uniquely suited to implement violence prevention activities in their communities. Prevention educators are specially trained to respond to disclosures and connect youth and adults alike to services that support their safety and healing, while also allowing prevention educators to focus on shifting community norms.

Prevention educators support the evolution of behavior change and shifts in attitudes and beliefs by supporting participants' understanding of healthy relationships, boundaries, consent, bias and oppression.

We Urge Your Support of HB2657-2

As a survivor of sexual abuse, harassment, and assault, from childhood through adolescence and into college, and as an advocate who has 20+ years of direct service experience in 3 states, including Oregon, I have spent the better part of my personal and professional life involved in crisis support and interventions. I've been called out to the hospital in the middle of the night, answered crisis hotlines, and conducted safety plans with survivors of all genders and ages. I have supported infant, youth, adult, and elderly survivors, and have advocated for survivors who are enlisted in the military, incarcerated in correctional institutions, and are members of faith communities. I have supported undocumented survivors, sex workers, and people with serious mental illnesses. I remain committed to working diligently to improve our systems and community-responses to sexual violence.

We must not abandon our support to survivors who have experienced significant trauma. We must, however, invest in efforts to prevent the trauma caused by harassment, abuse, assault, and violence in our communities. For these reasons, I urge your support of HB2657-2.

With gratitude,

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