

Dear Chair Williamson and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am the Executive Director at the Sexual Assault Resource Center, or SARC, in Beaverton, Oregon. SARC provides comprehensive services to people who have experienced sexual assault, including a 24/7 crisis support line, 24/7 in-person crisis response to Washington County hospitals, ongoing case management, counseling, and support groups. We also provide prevention education to schools in Multnomah and Washington Counties.

Oregon's rates of sexual assault are much higher than the national averages. Twenty-six per cent of Oregon women experience rape at some point in their lives,¹ compared with 19% nationally,² and 47% of Oregon women experience sexual assault other than rape at some point in their lives,³ compared with 44% nationally.⁴ While Oregon men fare better than Oregon women against national averages – 16% of Oregon men experience sexual assault during their lives⁵ compared with 23% nationally⁶ – this still amounts to nearly 170,000 Oregon men who have experienced sexual assault.⁷ Oregon youth are not immune to this epidemic. 188,000 Oregon girls and 90,000 Oregon boys experience rape before the age of 18.⁸

Sexual assault does not exist in a vacuum, but is one type of extreme behavior on a spectrum of social attitudes and behavioral norms that create and sustain a culture in which perpetrators believe they are entitled to abuse others. Sexual harassment exists on that spectrum as well, and it, too, is prevalent in Oregon. According to the 2018 Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, 7% of Oregon eighth graders and 6% of Oregon eleventh graders reported experiencing unwanted

¹ The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010-2012 State Report,, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.

² Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization – National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011, available at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm?s_cid=ss6308a1_e.

³ The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010-2012 State Report,, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.

⁴ Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization – National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011, available at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm?s_cid=ss6308a1_e

⁵ The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010-2012 State Report,, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.

⁶ Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization – National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011, available at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6308a1.htm?s_cid=ss6308a1_e

⁷ The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010-2012 State Report,, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.

⁸ The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010-2012 State Report,, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>.

sexual comments or attention *within the 30 days prior to the survey*.⁹ Oregon rates of sexual coercion, through which youth are pressured and bullied into submitting to sexual activity, are also very high. Nationally, 18% of all high-school-age girls report experiencing sexual coercion at some point in their lives,¹⁰ but in Oregon, 19% of eleventh-graders *alone* report experiencing sexual coercion.¹¹

Pursuant to Title IX, students have the right to attend schools without fear of experiencing sexual harassment and assault, and Oregon schools are obligated to keep them safe. Without support from the state, however, school districts often lack staff who can protect and enforce student rights and funding to provide training to staff and to students to educate them about their rights and how to seek help when they are victimized. Although schools are required to have a Title IX Coordinator on staff, without proper training, there is no assurance that the Title IX Coordinator is protecting students, ensuring that evidence-based prevention programs are offered on campus, conducting investigations in accordance with legal requirements, ensuring equitable access to services to students of all genders, or protecting students' rights to be free from sexual harassment and discrimination at school.

Oregon students deserve to be safe, and Oregon schools deserve support from the state to ensure that they are creating safe, healthy, and equitable environments for students. The Oregon Department of Education currently has funding for only one .25 FTE Title IX Coordinator for the entire state, which essentially leaves Oregon schools entirely on their own when they need support and assistance to recruit and train their Title IX Coordinators and develop and implement policies and protocols to protect students from sexual harassment and discrimination. Providing funding for two full-time Title IX Coordinators will improve school districts' access to state support in their efforts to keep their students safe.

Thank you for the time to learn and hear about the work SARC does, and the importance of protecting Oregon students from sexual harassment and assault. SARC urges the committee to consider increasing funding for Title IX Coordinators at the Oregon Department of Education.

Sincerely,



Amy S. Beard., J.D., M.S.W.

Executive Director

Available at

https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/BIRTHDEATHCERTIFICATES/SURVEYS/OREGONHEALTHYTEENS/Documents/2017/2017_OHT_State_Report.pdf.

¹⁰ Respectively, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Sexual Violence Facts at a Glance," 2012; Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal, 1996

¹¹ Oregon Youth Authority, "Youth Sexual Health Plan 5-Year Update," 2015