



# Oregon Coalition

Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

***In Support of Housing Services for Survivors: HB 2006, House Rules Committee, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019***

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Williamson and Wilson, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV), I submit this testimony in support of HB 2006 and increased access to housing assistance for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Founded in 1978, OCADSV is a statewide nonprofit organization that is comprised of 50 member programs, both non-profit community-based and tribal nation, that provide advocacy services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking throughout the state. **Our advocates and the survivors we serve are clear: access to safe and stable housing is one of the main barriers to the safety and well-being of survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Oregon.**

According to a landmark national study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 1 in 3 Oregonians will experience some form of sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime. This is one of the highest rates in the nation. Fleeing an abusive partner is already incredibly difficult and dangerous; the worsening housing crisis in our state compounds this situation.

More and more survivors seeking safety from abuse face the untenable choice of deciding whether to stay in an abusive home or risk homelessness and violence on the streets. Emergency crisis shelters are full to capacity across the state. It is ever-more difficult for survivors in shelter to move out of shelter and into housing; thus shelter stays are getting longer and there is reduced capacity to meet incoming need. Low vacancy rates mean higher barriers to accessing housing - survivors must juggle multiple application fees, long searches, and discrimination. The National Network to End Domestic Violence has identified shelter and housing assistance as the #1 unmet need of survivors seeking services in Oregon.<sup>1</sup>

Without stable housing, it is difficult or impossible for survivors to hold down a job, keep children in school, access neighborhood amenities, and stay healthy and safe. Safe shelter and housing create opportunity, and are keys to breaking the cycle of poverty and violence. Housing assistance for survivors should be provided in concert with the expert support and safety planning expertise that is available at the statewide network of domestic and sexual violence service providers. Please support the network's ability to better meet the crisis needs of survivors in our state.

Thank you for your service, and for the opportunity to submit testimony on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,  
Vanessa Timmons  
Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nnedv.org/mdocs-posts/2017-oregon/>