



# Tillamook County Women's Resource Center

Working to end domestic & sexual violence in Tillamook County since 1982

Trabajando para terminar la violencia doméstica y sexual en el condado de Tillamook desde 1982

1902 Second Street, Tillamook, Oregon 97141

May 13, 2019

To: Chair Williamson, Vice Chair Gorsek, and Vice Chair Sprenger,  
Members of the Committee

From: Beth Hope, Advocate and CCR Coordinator,  
Tillamook County Women's Resource Center: *We serve survivors of all genders*

Re: Support of SB 995, improvements to the Sexual Assault Protection Order (SAPO)

As an advocate who serves survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, I was glad to see the 2013 passage of Oregon's HB2997, which implemented the Sexual Assault Protection Order (SAPO), protection for victims who do not qualify for the Family Abuse Prevention Act order. The SAPO was especially necessary in Oregon, which has one of the highest rates of sexual assault in the nation, according to the CDC.

As an advocate, I serve surviving victims of sexual assault and child sexual abuse. They allow me to accompany them as they are subjected to the lengthy and invasive Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE). I listen quietly as they answer the questions of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), and I stay with them as they are interviewed by law enforcement officers. They consistently demonstrate strength and courage in the most difficult situation possible. It is a privilege to sit with them.

What I know about sexual assault is that it is the worst kind of assault—humiliating and demeaning—even soul-destroying. Having to describe what happened is almost as embarrassing and painful as the assault itself. Often survivors do not want **anyone** to know; they may refuse to accept my business card, fearful that someone will see it and figure out what happened. Survivors almost always blame themselves, no matter the circumstances. It is then any wonder that sexual assault is the most under-reported person-crime in the United States?

I have served many survivors of sexual assault who were also sexually abused as children. Most of them have told no one about the childhood abuse. In fact, they might come in several times before they feel safe enough to tell me. Sometimes it is victims of domestic violence who, over time, become comfortable enough to reveal a sexual assault.

Because of the particular cruelty of sexual assault and the terrible toll it takes on victims and the resulting hesitation to tell their stories, I appreciate that the Oregon State Legislature is considering SB995. That it provides victims with additional time to report the crime is essential—and wonderful. Victims will have the opportunity to gain the strength they need to take action to protect themselves.

I can foresee the relief survivors will feel when they learn that the award period is five years, rather than only one. Additionally, the possibility of a permanent SAPO could be life-saving, or at least life-altering. That the provision for alternative methods of service is a part of this bill is critical, since the SAPO is intended to benefit victims of sexual assault who do not have familial or close relationships with perpetrators and may have no way of locating them for service.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective. On behalf of victims and survivors, I ask that you support them by passing SB995. Thank you from the depths of my heart.