

In support of SB 995
Danielle Howden, Sexual Assault Services Coordinator

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

My name is Danielle Howden, and I am the Sexual Assault Services Coordinator for the Center for Hope & Safety (CHS). Our agency serves victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking and human trafficking in Marion and Polk Counties.

Sexual Assault Protective Orders (SAPOs) are critical to survivors who would not otherwise be eligible for an order of protection, but who need access to safety measures. There are also community resources around safety, such as the TA-DVS grant at DHS (Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors), that may not be available to a survivor of sexual assault. In these cases, a SAPO may provide an essential element of a survivor's safety plan.

In my experience working with survivors of sexual assault, both removing the 180-day look-back period and adjusting the one-year time period of a SAPO could help in facilitating safety for survivors. I will highlight two examples, so you can see the ways this might help survivors:

Due to the trauma of a sexual assault, a survivor I worked with ended up being admitted to the hospital immediately after the assault. During the time it took to recover and stabilize, the survivor also found out the perpetrator was going to be deployed. At the time, the survivor was focused on staying hidden until the deployment and the 180-day period lapsed. The perpetrator ended up coming back from deployment early, which is when the survivor reached out to our agency. The survivor was hoping to report the assault to the police and did not feel safe but no longer qualified for the 180-day period to apply for the SAPO.

In supporting survivors through the criminal court process, I find cases may be open for an extended amount of time. Cases often are ongoing past the one-year time period of a SAPO, especially in cases that involve minors or multiple victims. This means survivors face potentially going to court against the perpetrator for two cases. One survivor I worked with was struggling to participate with the DA in the criminal case because it continually brought up the trauma for her. In the middle of the case, she had to renew the SAPO and then the perpetrator contested the order. Not only did she fear losing the protective order, she also had to appear in court against the perpetrator. Without an official decision on the criminal charges, the perpetrator fought hard against the SAPO, putting the survivor further into crisis and making the criminal case even more difficult to participate in. The survivor ended up being hospitalized due to complications around an injury from the assault that was aggravated by the stress of the contestment. Not having the SAPO court proceeding on top of the criminal case proceedings would have allowed the survivor to focus on her safety while working with the DA.

Both of these survivors, and others like them, could have benefited from different time allowances when applying for and maintaining a SAPO.

For these reasons, I urge your support on Senate Bill 995.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am available for any questions you might have.

Center for HOPE & SAFETY



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

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because everyone deserves a life free of violence