

**Testimony in Support of HB 3415A-4
Senate Judiciary Committee
May 16th, 2019**

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning in support of HB 3415A with the Dash 4 amendments, which will help ensure safety and support for college students who experience domestic or sexual violence or harrasment.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon. A significant number of our clients come to us for help as they are struggling to escape or recover from domestic or sexual violence. Domestic and sexual violence are serious public health and safety issues in our state. Victims suffer great psychological, emotional, and physical trauma, which have long term impact on their lives. Domestic and sexual violence greatly contribute to the vulnerability of our clients, and further trap them in poverty and crisis. OLC is committed to supporting the coordinated community response necessary to help prevent this violence, and to helping victims in crisis move towards the safety and stability they need for recovery.

College-age women are at heightened risk of assault, abuse, or harassment.¹ At a time in their lives when their trajectory should be soaring, the ramifications of assault can send victims plummeting into a spiral. Often, victims struggle to get the help they need in the aftermath of abuse. Trauma may be exacerbated by frequently seeing the perpetrator on campus or in class. Survivors may be afraid to confide in anyone or to seek help, due to social stigma, fear, embarrassment, or other concerns. As a result, victims often suffer significant health problems, including depression, anxiety, and PTSD, and they may also experience social isolation or academic difficulty. Many survivors consider leaving school altogether.²

It is incumbent upon us as a state to protect our college students and to preserve their access to education and opportunity. This legislature has shown great leadership, along with the Attorney General, the Sexual Assault Task Force, our higher education partners, victim advocates, and other stakeholders, in taking steps to prioritize victim safety and support on campus. HB 3415 will continue the tradition of bi-partisan leadership on these issues by ensuring access to trauma-informed, gender inclusive, and culturally responsive support for survivors. The bill ensures that campuses implement training requirements for investigators, coordinators, and others involved with the response process to ensure that adjudication is equitable, responsive and fair to all parties.

Passage of HB 3415 with the Dash 4 amendments will codify current best practices, while making targeted improvements to ensure that our campuses are responsive to the needs of all students who may have experienced sexual harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and who need and deserve help and support in managing the ramifications – academic, physical, or psychological – of that abuse. For all of these reasons, we urge support of the bill.

¹ <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence>

² <https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/sexual-assault-and-rape/college-sexual-assault>