

March 26, 2019

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education
c/o Co-Chairs Senator Lew Frederick and Representative Susan McLain
Submitted electronically

RE: HB 5024, Higher Education Coordinating Committee (HECC) budget bill

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing this letter in support of continued funding for the University of Oregon School of Law Domestic Violence Clinic. I participated in the clinic as a third-year student at Oregon Law and my experience as a student advocate there solidified my path to a career in public service. I went on to work as a judicial clerk, public defender, and non-profit administrator and educator.

Empowering law students to enter careers in public service is a vital function of public legal education. As a clinic student, I not only provided necessary services to domestic violence survivors who were members of my community, I gained experience that enabled me to continue advocating for underserved clients once I became an attorney. Exposure to public service work through opportunities like the Domestic Violence Clinic helped me identify and prepare for my passion and calling to a career in public service in a way that my law school coursework, valuable as it was, could not.

I recall my first week in the clinic. The amount of trust and confidence placed in me by clinic faculty gave me trust and confidence in myself, which helped me see that I could use my legal education and training to make meaningful contributions in the community around me. I was so excited to sharpen my client interviewing skills through intake and was honored to be selected to participate in a protection order case where a client's former partner had previously been convicted of attempting to murder her. I called my mother on the way home from the clinic one evening that first week and said something along the lines of: I've been bit by this bug, I think I might do this kind of work forever. Fifteen years after graduating from Oregon Law, I am still doing public interest work. As a proud DV Clinic alumna, I hope to see future generations of law students benefit from the training, guidance, and inspiration I received from the clinic. I respectfully ask that you not eliminate the Domestic Violence Clinical Legal Education Fund.

Sincerely,



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