



House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Testimony in Support of HB 4133: Funding for Domestic Violence Specialists

Chair Alissa Keny-Guyer and members of the Committee.

My name is Trish Garner and I am the State Public Policy Chair of the American Association of University Women of Oregon. AAUW has been empowering women since 1881 by advancing equity through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of addressing the needs of women and families in distress as a result of domestic violence. The negative impacts last long and run deep. It is similarly difficult to overstate the challenges that these women and families face in obtaining the array of services that are usually needed to address their needs. Placing advocates in the same DHS offices that are providing its services significantly reduces barriers to receiving this much needed assistance.

The co-location model represents a win-win situation for the women and families in need of services, but for the state as well. DHS coworkers commonly can't keep up with all the cases that are assigned to them. Advocates can amplify DHS services with much needed, individually targeted, expert assistance. They can, for example, identify practical, short- and long-term solutions that can often be missed. Their placement can also more effectively ensure that women and families actually and in fact receive the assistance they need.

Perhaps one of the most important features of co-locating advocates within DHS offices is the possibility that children will be able to stay with a non-offending parent and provide at least some measure of stability to the family. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of reassurance that this assistance can provide to children and their parents.¹

AAUW of OR urges your support of HB 4133 and the funding that goes along with it.

Respectfully Submitted,

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¹ See, e.g. "A Stable Home Equals a Successful Child, Huffpost, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/a-stable-home-equals-a-successful-child_b_9688750; and <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Childrens-Commissioners-2018-Stability-Index-Overview.pdf>.

