



Testimony in support of HB 2575
House Committee on Equitable Policing
3.2.21

Chair Bynum, Vice Chair Noble, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF), **we are pleased to submit this letter in support of HB 2575.**

The mission of SATF is to improve the response to and prevention of sexual violence in Oregon¹. We believe that violence is preventable and that everyone plays a role; law enforcement's role in prevention is to create systems that are safe and predictable for victims to feel supported coming forward.

SATF provides training for all new officers at DPSST², as well as statewide training for law enforcement, prosecutors and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) on trauma-informed sexual assault investigation and prosecution. Our curriculum includes: sexual assault dynamics, neurobiology of trauma, trauma-informed interview techniques and best practices, a review of case law, and community/partner relationship building to support successful Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART).

Our curriculum connects sexual assault dynamics with the lived experiences and impact of historical trauma, including institutional racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and other structural inequities. Participants are asked to make the connection between implicit bias and the impact on their investigation.

Trauma impacts every single part of an investigation - from evidence collection, to how victims present in an interview - and this carries through all the way through to a trial. It is imperative that every discipline has a foundational understanding of trauma for our systems' response to be truly effective.

Because of trauma, victims present with a variety of behaviors that may include: not making eye contact with first responders; not crying or appearing with a flat affect; laughing or appearing jovial; they may delay their disclosures and may not recall details in a chronological order.

¹ The Sexual Assault Task Force is a private, non-profit, non-governmental statewide agency with over 100 multi-disciplinary members appointed by Attorney General Rosenblum. Members serve as advisors on 1 of 8 subcommittees including: Advocacy Response, Campus, Criminal Justice, Legislative & Public Policy, Medical-Forensic, Men's Engagement, Offender Management, and Prevention Education.

² We are grateful to work with DPSST training new officers - we know from a state-wide needs assessment we conducted with law enforcement in 2019 that the 8-hours we spend with new officers at DPSST may be the only training some will ever receive around responding to crimes of sexual violence. With grant funding, we work to make our statewide 2 ½ day training as accessible as possible by offering free training, providing travel scholarships - including lodging and per diem allowances, and presenting at as many locations throughout the state as possible. We still encounter challenges to law enforcement attending these trainings. HB2575 would help overcome these barriers by investing in community-focused training to increase access to best-practices in trauma-informed investigations.

The overall goal of our training³ is to provide law enforcement and prosecutors with practical, applicable skills, giving law enforcement and prosecutors the confidence to interact with victims and investigate and prosecute what are often complex and complicated cases. In order for investigators and prosecutors to have the most successful interviews possible, it is important they know how to interview a victim to elicit these details.

We believe that HB2575 will allow Oregon to strengthen our response to victims of abuse and violence by:

1. Developing a model policy with the buy-in and input of multi-disciplinary partners. Communities that have strong community partnerships and survivor-centered, trauma-informed policies in place, serve victims in ways that have positive measurable outcomes.
2. Implementing pilot programs in strategic areas of the state will allow for the development and implementation of training that speaks to the unique needs of communities. We appreciate that counties will be able to be responsive to their own community, based on the resources available to them, and that these grant funds can enhance their capacity to offer trauma-informed responses to victims.
3. Implementing trauma-informed training into the curriculum at DPSST supports their current update to the 16-week Basic Academy for new officers. We've appreciated the opportunity to work with DPSST to update our 8-hour sexual assault-specific training, and believe that HB2575 will continue to support our shared goal with DPSST.

For these reasons, we urge your support of HB 2575.

Respectfully submitted,

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³ Training Evaluation Feedback: "All great tools. All information will help me be a better investigator; so far all presenters have been great; I really liked the way bias was explained in a non-condemning way. Something I haven't experienced; the cadre of speakers was the best collaborative group I have ever experienced in my 20 years of law enforcement experience. The speakers were credible, well-organized, and dynamic; Overall a very good training. I would recommend to all law enforcement."