



Sybil Hebb  
Director of Legislative Advocacy  
522 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 812  
Portland, OR 97204  
503.936.8959  
[shebb@oregonlawcenter.org](mailto:shebb@oregonlawcenter.org)

---

**Testimony in Support of HB 5014  
Before the Public Safety  
Subcommittee of the Joint Ways  
and Means Committee  
April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Presented by Sybil Hebb**

***Re: Yes on POP #311 and full-funding in HB 5014 to assist survivors of domestic and sexual violence***

Co-Chairs Gorsek and Sollman, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), I submit this testimony in support of the budget for the Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) of the Oregon Department of Justice. Full funding of HB 5014 and inclusion of POP #311 will ensure support for critically important services for survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault within the Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) of the Department of Justice.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. 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.

CVSSD services are essential to the safety and well-being of our clients who are survivors. CVSSD serves survivors in every county in the state, through Oregon's Tribes, through community-based domestic and sexual violence programs, through system-based programs, and through culturally-specific programs. There are several key programs that are of the highest importance to our clients:

**The Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS)** is the only General Fund source of dollars for confidential shelter, support, and safety planning services for survivors and their children. These dollars are critical to the stability of safety services through community-based, Oregon Tribes, and culturally-specific organizations. ODSVS services help victims identify and explore real options to escape violence. Despite investments in these services, for which we are deeply grateful, deficits persist which leave us unable to meet the current need. In 2019, there were more than 8,000 requests for shelter by adults that couldn't be met due to lack of capacity.

We know that domestic violence rates have [escalated sharply](#) during the COVID pandemic. And we know that almost half (48%) of survivors seeking shelter have at least one minor child with them at the time they seek safety services. ODSVS funds have never been more important to survivors and their children. Please support these funds to your greatest capacity. These services save lives.

**The Housing Navigator Program** allows culturally-specific programs, Oregon Tribes, and community-based domestic and sexual violence programs to serve survivors who need expert assistance in finding safe, stable, and affordable housing. Through the Housing Navigator program, specialized advocates are able to offer individualized, trauma-informed housing placement assistance for survivors who may need to move to be safe, or who need help with landlord negotiations, housing searches, application processes, tenant education, and other case management. The program also provides targeted and strategic financial assistance in the form of motel or hotel vouchers when necessary because shelter space is unavailable, and can help pay moving costs, deposits and application fees, or other one-time expenses that will facilitate housing security.

In 2019, [81% of survivors' unmet needs](#) were for housing and shelter. As Oregon's housing affordability crisis continues to reach new peaks in the midst of the COVID pandemic, the Housing Navigator program can make it possible for survivors to escape the cycle of abuse to establish safe, stable, and affordable housing for themselves and their children. In 2020, 84% of survivors receiving assistance through this program still had safe and stable housing three months after receiving assistance. **We are asking for a \$5 million investment in these services to address the exponential need during this pandemic recovery period.**

Other programs we support include the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (which helps lead and inform the state's coordinated response to sexual violence), the Crime Victim's Compensation Program (which provides important benefits to victims who are part of a prosecution process) and POP #311 to ensure against cuts to this program, the DA-based victim assistance offices, the Address Confidentiality Program, and the Domestic Violence Resource Prosecutor position.

In closing, please support the full funding package for CVSSD budgets. ODSVS and the Housing Navigator program provide a critical foundation for victims seeking shelter, safety and support in escaping domestic or sexual violence. These services help victims make decisions about safety steps that are right for them, and facilitate victims' efforts to access other services as part of their safety plan. These services can mean the difference between sleeping on the streets or an unsafe home.

Thank you to the committee members for their time and attention to this issue. We urge you to pass HB 5014 and ensure a \$5 million investment in Housing Navigation services and full funding allocations for victim services programs within CVSSD.