



April 5th, 2021

Dear Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair Sollman and Members of the Committee,

***My name is BB Beltran and I am the Executive Director of Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) and I strongly support HB 5014 which would increase funding to assist survivors of sexual violence with their emergency housing needs.*** SASS is a non-profit organization providing outreach, advocacy and support to survivors of sexual violence and their partners, families and friends throughout Eugene-Springfield and the rest of Lane County. SASS advocates listen, believe, support, accompany, offer information and referrals, and provide peer counseling to survivors of sexual violence, past and present. We maintain a 24-hour crisis and support line and provide 24-hour emergency advocacy for survivors of sexual assault and sexual abuse.

***HB 5014 would increase funding to community based and culturally specific organizations that assist survivors of sexual and domestic violence and would allow programs across the state to continue to address both the imminent danger of violence and the often-imminent threat of becoming unhoused.*** In 2019, both the Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women and the National Network to End Domestic Violence found housing stability to be the greatest issue and unmet need facing survivors in Oregon.

The ongoing crises of the last year have taken a huge toll on survivors, particularly those that are trying to achieve stability and autonomy by securing safe and affordable housing. Additionally, the pandemic restrictions have strained the already fragile emergency shelter system and has resulted in many programs utilizing hotel/motel stays to safely shelter survivors. ***Without additional funding, programs will not be able to sustain the costs associated with utilizing hotels/motels as safe shelter and be forced to turn survivors away from emergency shelter.***

In addition to better meeting the need for emergency shelter, ***HB 5014 would also provide funding for individualized, flexible, transitional housing services such as assistance with relocation costs, application fees and economic literacy education so survivors can achieve long term stability and safety.*** Housing instability impacts the most vulnerable in our communities: folks with disabilities; elders; youth; IPOC; and, oftentimes, survivors of sexual and domestic violence. HB 5014, while not a panacea, would help ameliorate the barriers survivors face in achieving safe, stable housing and assist them on their path to economic recovery and autonomy. ***As the housing crisis continues to grow in our state, it is more important than ever for lawmakers to prioritize and invest in the health and safety of survivors and our communities. To that end, I urge the passage of HB 5014.*** Thank you for your work on behalf of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,  
BB Beltran  
Executive Director