

April 5, 2021

TO: Rep. Janeen Sollman, Co-Chair  
Sen. Chris Gorsek, Co-Chair  
Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety

FROM: Erin Greenawald, J.D.  
Owner, Greenawald Law  
Former Domestic Violence Resource Prosecutor, Oregon Department of Justice

Co-Chairs Gorsek and Sollman:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of HB 5014 and more specifically, Policy Option Package #311, submitted by the Oregon Department of Justice's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD).

I have had the privilege of working with CVSSD for many years. I originally engaged with CVSSD as a "line" prosecutor in Marion and Yamhill counties, and later, from 2010-2018, as Oregon Department of Justice's first Domestic Violence Resource Prosecutor (DVRP). Presently, I represent crime victims and survivors in pursuing justice through the civil legal process, as well as assisting them in ensuring that their rights in the criminal process are upheld. Many of my clients have deeply benefitted from CVSSD's services.

I have witnessed first-hand the extraordinary work of CVSSD staff and the impact that CVSSD's programs have had on the victims who receive the critical support and resources that those programs provide: everything from providing required advocacy and notice of victims' rights to survivors of violent crimes to delivering financial assistance for victims including but not limited to payment of medical bills, counseling, and/or funeral expenses. CVSSD also provides important training, in collaboration with its statewide partners, for hundreds, if not thousands, of first responders and advocates across the state on human trafficking, advocacy, victims' rights and more.

Traditionally, 30% of CVSSD's Crime Victim Compensation Program, the Victim Rights Program and Trafficking Intervention Program are funded through punitive damages funds. Due to tort reform, however, those funds are dwindling. To address this shortfall, CVSSD has submitted POP #311 to cover the expenses and services that victims all over the state have relied upon but which can no longer be funded without General Fund support.

As I understand it, not funding CVSSD's POP will result in the practical elimination of the tremendously important programs identified above. The result will be catastrophic: Nearly 5,000 claims a year that are currently accepted by CVSSD will be severely restricted. Over \$7 million dollars a biennium that is currently paid out to victims and survivors will no longer be available to them. Real people will be left without critical support.

I appreciate the competing priorities in allocating General Fund money. Today, however, I ask that you make Oregon crime victims and survivors a top priority and urge your support of POP #311.

Sincerely,

Erin S. Greenawald

Testimony in Support of POP #311

