



4110 SE Hawthorne Boulevard #503 | Portland, Oregon 97214
Admin (503) 222-6507 | Shelter Hotline (503) 222-6222
We believe that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence.

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and members of the committee,

Re: Yes on SB 271-1

My name is Lindsey Vold and I am the Youth and Advocacy Services Manager at Raphael House of Portland where I have worked with domestic violence survivors and their families for 15 years. Thank you for taking up SB 271-1. I strongly support this bill, which is essential for the stability and wellbeing of the victims and survivors we serve.

At Raphael House, we believe that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence. We have been a safe haven for survivors of domestic violence fleeing abuse for more than 40 years, and we proudly help families find the long-term safety, stability, and independence they deserve—while also working to prevent future abuse through education. This past year alone, our programs reached more than 3,273 survivors and community members throughout the Portland Metro area.

Passage of SB 271-1 would allow domestic and sexual violence programs across the state to continue to address both the imminent danger of violence and the often-imminent threat of becoming houseless. 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. Domestic violence also remains one of the leading causes of homelessness in women and families nationwide.

SB 271-1 would allow for community-based domestic violence programs to continue offering critical services and grow capacity to serve survivors and their children who are facing housing instability. Programs would be able to offer individualized assistance for those who may need to move for safety when fleeing an abusive partner, or who need help with housing searches, landlord negotiations, application processes, and tenant education.

At Raphael House, we have been able to witness the positive impact that this type of support and flexible funding can mean for survivors. This past year, all the

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recipients of Survivor Housing Funds, 86 percent of whom identify as BIPOC, remained stably housed 6 months after receiving this funding support. Further, 92 percent reported that maintaining their stable housing helped them keep a job, attend school, receive medical/mental health services, or manage child custody.

One survivor who benefited from this resource was a single mother in our program who was experiencing serious health challenges that prevented her from being able to work full-time and pay her full rent. She reached out to us for support after receiving a 72-hour eviction notice. Thanks to the Survivor Housing Funds, we were able to pay her overdue rent and late fees, ensuring that this survivor and her family kept their housing and that she was able to continue focusing on medical treatment and parenting her young child.

We know that housing instability affects the most vulnerable in our communities: youth, the disabled and elderly, communities of color, and often – survivors of interpersonal violence. The barriers caused by lack of housing, coupled with the dynamics and trauma of abuse, create insurmountable barriers to safety, health and wellness, and economic self-sufficiency.

As the growing housing crisis continues in our state, we at Raphael House are grateful to the lawmakers who are prioritizing the health and safety of victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence with this legislation. We urge you to pass SB 271-1.

Thank you for your work.

Lindsey Vold
Youth and Advocacy Services Manager
Raphael House of Portland