

RE: Support for HB 3114

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and members of the committee:

My name is Jayne Downing, and I am the executive director of the Center for Hope & Safety. The Center for Hope & Safety serves Marion and Polk Counties and last year we provided 13,663 nights of shelter to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking in our community.

All of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Service Providers throughout Oregon work diligently to secure emergency confidential shelter for thousands of victims of violence each year. Due to the severe lack of shelter beds, most programs must turn to hotels and motels to make sure they can meet the demand for sheltering vulnerable survivors and their children.

There are many reasons we may need to use motels. As mentioned, shelter space may not be available due to reaching capacity. There may also be times when the shelter may be in the same vicinity of the abuser's home or work, or the victim needs to be closer to their work due to transportation concerns. Many victims are forced to flee without identification, or their abusive partner destroys their ID. Requiring the victim in these cases to present ID makes it impossible for the family to receive safe lodging.

HB 3114 addresses an important issue faced by many programs in both rural and urban areas of Oregon, the requirement of many of our Lodging partners to demand the survivor give their name and show their ID. This greatly increases the safety concerns for victims, as they fear their information will be disclosed. Many abusers will call hotels asking for their victim. All it takes is one Lodging staff member not being vigilant and the victim and their children are at significant risk.

Many of you on this committee have a strong background in victim-related issues and you know the most dangerous time for a victim of interpersonal violence is when they are fleeing. Our programs do everything we can to keep victims safe from harm and help them rebuild their lives free of violence. Confidentiality is the cornerstone of everything victims of violence need to gain safety and long-term stability.

At the Center for Hope & Safety, and other victim advocacy programs around the state, we provide our lodging partners with our program name and the name of the Advocate signing the family into the room. We pay for the lodging and sign the forms accepting liability for charges and any damages. In our experience, damages are rare, but we want to make sure the motel owners do not have any concerns about how they will be covered if the need for compensation should arise. In addition, our program staff make sure our lodging partners know we can respond within minutes 24-hours a day to provide ongoing support to the victim and address any concerns raised by the motel staff.

There is no downside for h/motel owners in this bill. The owners are not being asked to waive any compensation or liability. They will have contact information for the Service Provider and the Advocate signing the person into the room. Our only ask is to protect the confidentiality of the victim. This is a simple fix to a serious problem and one that could save lives in Oregon.

Our Lodging partners are an important piece in the safety network for victims of violence in Oregon. All we are asking in this bill is to provide the ability to make sure victims and their children are as safe as possible while residing in their establishments. We strongly urge your support of HB 3114 and thank you for your work to make Oregon a safer place for victims and survivors of violence.

Center for HOPE & SAFETY



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

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because everyone deserves a life free of violence