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Jan 27, 2023

Re: Support for HB 3018 Survivor Housing Fund

To: Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means;

My name is Mary Pat Luetke-Stahlman and I am the Executive Director of Oasis Advocacy and Shelter in Gold Beach, OR. I am writing this letter to share why you should pass HB 3018. Survivor Housing Funds have been a vital aspect of our services since it has been implemented. We work with individuals who are survivors of domestic and sexual violence and these resources have long helped us be able to assist with stable permanent housing. Oasis Advocacy and Shelter has been in Gold Beach for over 34 years. Homelessness has been an epidemic in the United States since the 1980s.

In Gold Beach, there are very few to no housing options and no efforts by the city/county to support survivors of violence to relocate outside the county. Oasis relies on these funds to help survivors begin the new stage in their lives on solid footing. We work with local programs to strengthen services and programs available in the area and we know that housing instability affects the most vulnerable in our community that is including communities of color, people with disabilities, and the elderly. These intersections are frequently intersected with survivors of interpersonal violence. Barriers that are caused by lack of housing, coupled with the dynamics of the trauma of abuse, create massive obstacles to safety, health and wellness, and economic self-sufficiency.

One story we would gladly share is of a woman with her dog. She came to us and stayed in our shelter for several months before being able to relocate into a trailer. While she stayed with Oasis at the emergency shelter, she was able to get a job but because she was unable to find housing as her time at the emergency shelter ended, we were able to place her in the travel trailer that was purchased by SHF funds. She has been in the travel trailer for three months and has exponentially improved. She reports feeling safe and is very grateful for housing support and works with her advocate to continue to seek more permanent housing. Based on her experience she plans on purchasing a travel trailer and has plans to seek out a new lot within the next six months.

As the housing crisis continues to worsen in Oregon, we continue to work to support survivors that come to us for services and appreciate all that the lawmakers do to prioritize the health and safety of victims and survivors of domestic violence along with sexual assault with this legislation. Please consider passing HB 3018.

Respectfully,
Mary Pat Luetke-Stahlman
Executive Director