



March 9, 2023

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, Senator Anderson, Senator Frederick, Senator Gelser Blouin, Senator Robinson, and Senator Wagner:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I am Kathryn Moakley, the Interim Director of the Domestic Violence Clinic, at the University of Oregon School of Law, and I am here to ask you support this bill, which will provide for funds for the clinic to hire an additional attorney and half-time support staff to serve more students and clients in our program. We would want these funds to be ongoing to continue to support the positions.

Our mission in the Clinic is to educate law students in providing holistic, trauma-informed legal services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The students work under highly trained attorney and provide direct services to clients in matters such as restraining orders, divorce and custody cases, and other civil legal matters that affect our clients' ability to achieve safety.

As I believe the committee members know, domestic violence is a serious issue in Oregon. In 2018, there were over 128,000 calls statewide to programs who assist survivors of domestic and sexual violence. In 2021, there were over 18,000 reports of domestic violence offenses to law enforcement across the state. In 2021 in Lane County, where the Clinic is located, there were over 8,000 calls to the hotline at Hope & Safety Alliance, which provides advocacy and other services for survivors. From 2019-2021, the Lane County District Attorney Victim's Services office assisted an average of 900 applicants a year in obtaining family abuse prevention act orders.

As these survivors seek safety, one of the most important needs they have is for accurate and informed legal services. The Clinic helps survivors understand their rights and options so they can make informed decisions and leave their abusive situations safely. The court process can often be overwhelming and confusing, especially for litigants who have experienced the trauma of abuse and must face their abuser in court. Financial abuse and limitations often leaves survivors of abuse unable to access legal help.

The Clinic can make the difference for a survivor in successfully litigating a case. A recent client provided the following feedback: "[The Clinic] was more helpful than I could ever begin to put into words. Not only did they help me get everything I was asking for in court twice and keep my child and I safe, but I was able to use the knowledge and skills they gave me to go ahead and represent myself the next time...I could not be more grateful"

You will hear from a former Clinic student about his experience providing representation to clients, but I will briefly state that I routinely hear from students that the Clinic experience is a highlight of their law school career, and that they feel more prepared for and just excited for



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serving clients in the future. We work very hard to help the students begin to develop their professional identities and stress the importance of service to the communities they will practice in once they graduate.

I ask that you support this bill, which will help us expand our work to teach students and help survivors, and I thank you again for your time and attention.

Kathryn Moakley



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