

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Committee On Higher Education,

My name is Caitryn Tronoski. I'm a first year college student, and I am testifying in support of HB3456.

In my first week on-campus, I was forced to take substances and then sexually assaulted by a group of people whose identities are still unknown.

I was confused and afraid. I was afraid to tell the friends who found me what had happened, and afraid to call the Community Safety officers. Even though I was so shaken the night of the incident, I did not know how I would be treated, because I was intoxicated at the time of the assault, even if it was forced on me. I elected to keep the incident quiet and did not accept help for a long time afterwards, because I did not know who would be told without my knowing. I did not know what could even be done, because I did not know the identities of the people assaulting me.

The day after it happened, an email was sent out and I discovered that this is the second time that an incident involving sexual assault has happened in the very first week of school. The very first week. Sexual assault and violence are so common on college campuses, but is so rarely reported.

HB3456, written by college students and student survivors to address the issues that students see on their own campuses, aims to prevent campus sexual violence, ensure institutional transparency and increase support for student survivors.

This bill would provide services that I knew I needed and wanted when it happened to me. It provides the support and care that would have helped me, that would have helped my friends who have experienced sexual assault, and it will help so many people should it happen again. I did not submit a report or complaint because I was scared of how many people would know, how I would have been viewed, but all I needed was help and resources. With this bill, I would have had the confidence to reach out for help.

This is why I testify in support of HB3456. This bill will encourage students to reach out, and to know that they are safe and supported. This bill will increase transparency, which may help to prevent what happened to me from happening again.

I urge the committee to vote HB3456 favorably out of committee and help end the epidemic of campus sexual violence. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.