

March 13, 2023

IN SUPPORT OF HB 3456

I have more than 20 years of experience in sexual and relationship violence prevention education and advocacy in educational settings. For the past nine years, I have been the director of a confidential advocacy program at Reed College in Portland, and a volunteer on the campus subcommittee of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force.

I support HB 3456's mandate for biennial sexual misconduct surveys; development and administration of surveys and analysis of data is not overly burdensome or expensive, and the information they provide is well worth the investment. Reed has been administering a biennial sexual misconduct survey since 2015, and the results reflect the gap between reports made to the college and actual experiences of sexual assault, relationship abuse, and stalking. This helps us target our resources to improve student outcomes

I support the requirement of a confidential advocate on campuses. The role of the confidential advocate is completely different from that of a Title IX coordinator or counselor. Because students are more likely to talk to me as a confidential resource than the campus Title IX Coordinator, I serve literally ten times as many survivors as he does.

I support the amnesty provisions of HB 3456. Any student should be able to seek support for the harm someone else did to them without worrying about getting in trouble. For example, during a COVID lockdown a student was raped in their room by another student who pushed their way in. The survivor came to me because they knew I was confidential; they were afraid to report the rape because they thought that they would get kicked out of the dorm for violating COVID restrictions because another person was in their room. Because we have a robust amnesty policy on campus, I was able to assure them that they absolutely would not get in trouble for a minor infraction of the rules when they asked for help from the Title IX coordinator.

I support the waiver of academic success requirements for survivors. No one's academic or professional career should be derailed by the harm someone else did to them. Being a student is hard; being a student who has been traumatized by sexual misconduct is even harder. Statistically, we know that students who were sexually assaulted are more likely to be in academic jeopardy than their peers who were not. Losing a scholarship or academic standing because of trauma is deeply unfair and blames victims for experiencing trauma.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with you, and hope you will support survivors by voting for HB 3456.

Sincerely,

Rowan Frost, MPH