

OREGON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE



SUPPORT HB 3456 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION MARCH 16, 2023

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs McIntire and Ruiz, and members of the committee:

Thank you for your time and consideration. On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (Oregon SATF), I am pleased to submit testimony in support of the HB 3456.

At the Oregon SATF, our mission is to facilitate and support a collaborative, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence in Oregon. Our goal is to prevent sexual violence from happening in the first place, while simultaneously improving our response efforts to mitigate trauma and ensure the safety and security of all victims and survivors.

About the Oregon SATF Campus Program

As the campus coordinator at SATF, I have the pleasure of serving all of Oregon's colleges and universities—including all community colleges, private universities, and medical schools. I have worked with and on campuses in Oregon on issues related to sexual violence for over fifteen years.

In 2022, our nationally-recognized campus program provided over 2300 technical assistance contacts with staff and faculty at Oregon schools working to address or prevent sexual harassment and violence. Our work is done at the nexus where the needs of survivors, needs of staff, best practices in trauma-informed care, compliance, and prevention reside.

Because of our unique position as a confidential resource, our agency has an equally unique view into what is happening, collectively, on college campuses across the state. I am confident in saying that Oregon's colleges and universities, by and large, are staffed with dedicated, caring, intelligent, and resourceful staff that work in areas of violence prevention and response. Partners in other states often remark on the incredible work done in Oregon.

I am also confident in stating that all schools have areas of growth as it relates to sexual violence prevention and response: not all schools conduct campus climate surveys, meaningfully connect students with confidential advocacy services, connect with community partners to build meaningful relationships that benefit students, and/or conduct prevention programming. Often, these areas of improvement are issues of resource availability, competing priorities, and lack of bandwidth.

Our Current Landscape

- **When we look at the ongoing landscape of legislation related to campus sexual violence prevention and response, Oregon has been, and continues to be, a leader in our country.**
- This legislature continues to offer bipartisan, bicameral support of legislation needed to improve our response to violence, while simultaneously supporting students.
- Most recently, our state has taken to codifying best practices for sexual violence prevention and response in a manner that allows schools to continue their good work, even as the national guidance and landscape continue to change.
- Some stakeholders have shared that there is potential for “redundancy” with HB 3456 and Federal law . Because Federal guidance is poised to change again this year, these “redundancies” are not a given, and we have good evidence to show that as Federal policies change, Oregon has made the right choice of codifying trauma-informed practices that are then rolled-back by the Federal government.
- If schools are already implementing portions of this bill, they should be applauded and allowed to continue implementing excellent work.
- If they are not, now is the time for this legislature to provide guidance in terms of policy, and support schools to align with best practices.
- Schools are also navigating unprecedented retention and funding deficits after Covid-19. This financial impact can also directly impact the ability of a school to implement violence prevention and response measures in a thoughtful, comprehensive manner.
- We urge the committee to work with the bill authors to identify potential funding for schools to support the implementation of this bill.

Campus Climate Surveys

- In the field of public health, we know that the first step in addressing a social problem (such as sexual violence and harassment in campus communities) is to understand the scope.
- **Requiring schools to conduct campus climate surveys that assess these impacts, prevention work, and trust in community resources supports the work of prevention, advocacy and response.**

Campus Climate Surveys (Continued)

- **A coordinated effort to implement campus climate surveys in Oregon will provide necessary data to inform prevention and intervention strategies, adjust services, and examine effectiveness of current initiatives.**
- As mentioned in other's written testimony, the Federal government has established criteria for schools to participate in mandated campus climate surveys provided by the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education through the 2022 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) amendments. Our hope as an agency is that the Campus Climate Survey Commission established by HB 3456 would be mindful of this requirement, working with schools to reduce any duplication of efforts required by schools to implement and evaluate required climate surveys.

Our Current Approach to Campus Climate Surveys as a State

- Many of Oregon's schools have conducted "Campus Climate Surveys", or surveys that assess the impact of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence or domestic violence in their community. Some do so on an ongoing basis.
- **However, there is no effort to ensure that we can do the following in our state:**
 - Compare data across institution types and sizes (collect uniform data, or compare "apples to apples");
 - Conduct climate surveys specific to sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault at all campuses on a consistent, predictable basis;
 - Understand how statewide efforts and federal guidelines impact student's experiences with sexual and domestic violence;
 - Understand how sexual violence impacts retention at Oregon schools;
 - Ensure transparency by having public access to data collected by schools; and
 - Provide consistent access to data for advocates, preventionists, and those professionals responding to sexual and domestic violence so that they may understand current trends, adjust outreach and prevention efforts, and improve services for survivors. Currently, many of these staff do not get to see the data collected by their institutions.
- **In the past few years, Oregon has lost out on opportunities to secure additional funding to support schools doing this good work due to lack of statewide data. We have an opportunity to change this with HB 3456.**
- Ensuring that all schools collect critical data related to domestic and sexual violence, and do so in a way that allows our state to assess trends across institution types, provides Oregon with a better picture of the impact of sexual harassment and violence experienced by students, allowing for better response and prevention initiatives statewide.

Confidential Advocacy Services

- **HB 3456's provision to codify access to confidential campus advocates not only is best practice for supporting survivors in their healing, but is also good business sense.**
- Confidential advocacy services support survivors to stay safe, and meet their basic needs (including housing, medical services, and other care) after violence.
- When schools facilitate access to confidential services, survivors are more likely to stay in school, and graduate.
- **This means better health and financial outcomes for the survivor, and improved retention of students for the college or university.**
- **Several schools are or have already implemented these advocacy services for students, through a variety of models that would be codified in HB 3456.** This includes Portland State University, Portland Community College, Willamette University, Linfield University, University of Oregon, Reed College, Southwestern Oregon Community College, Southern Oregon University, Rogue Community College, Oregon State University, and Umpqua Community College, amongst others.

Broad Support for HB 3456

- As evidenced in the written record, this bill receives support from a wide variety of stakeholders, including students, educators, community-based domestic violence and sexual assault agencies, the Alliance to End Violence Against Women, experts in the field of domestic and sexual violence prevention and response, and the Oregon Department of Justice.
- Many campus coalitions support the intention of the bill, and would appreciate a workgroup or work session to collaborate with the bill authors.
- This bill was informed by campus-based advocates, students, preventionists, policy specialists, community-based advocacy agencies, and those with expertise in survey design and implementation.

In closing, I ask that you support HB 3456, and identify opportunities to support colleges and universities with funding to implement this bill as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, I welcome any questions that you may have at this time.

With gratitude,



Carli Rohner

Campus Coordinator

Resources + Citations

Support for Oregon Campuses

- **Oregon SATF Campus Program:** www.oregonsatf.org/campus
 - Confidential technical assistance, training, and resource support for advocates, preventionists, administrators, and response professionals (including Title IX and Campus Safety).
- **Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence:** www.ocadsv.org
 - Support for Oregon-based advocacy programs supporting survivors of domestic and sexual violence.
- **Campus Advocacy and Prevention Professionals Association (CAPPA):** www.nationalcappa.org/home
- **National Sexual Violence Resource Center:** www.nsvrc.org
- **National Network to End Domestic Violence "Safety Net Project"** (Tech and Advocacy Program Support): <https://nnedv.org/content/technology-safety/>
- **The Stalking Prevention, Awareness and Resource Center:** www.stalkingawareness.org

Campus Climate Surveys

- Klein, L.B. & Brewer, Nathan & Mennicke, Annelise & Christensen, M. Candace & Baldwin-White, Adrienne & Cloy, Cherita & Wood, Leila. (2021). Centering Minoritized Students in Campus Interpersonal Violence Research. *Journal of Family Violence*. 36. 10.1007/s10896-020-00223-8.
- Krause, Kathleen & Woofter, Rebecca & Haardörfer, Regine & Windle, Michael & Sales, Jessica & Yount, Kathryn. (2018). Measuring Campus Sexual Assault and Culture: A Systematic Review of Campus Climate Surveys. *Psychology of Violence*. 9. 10.1037/vio0000209.
- Rohner, C., Sandmeyer, J., Foster, M. (2017) "Campus Climate Survey Toolkit", Oregon SATF in partnership with the American Public Health Association. Available at <https://oregonsatf.org/campus-climate-survey-toolkit-final>
- Swartout KM, Wood L, Busch-Armendariz N. Responding to Campus Climate Data: Developing an Action Plan to Reduce Campus Sexual Misconduct. *Health Educ Behav*. 2020 Jun;47(1_suppl):70S-74S. doi: 10.1177/1090198120912386. PMID: 32452258.

Comprehensive Strategies for Responding to and Preventing Sexual Violence on Campus

- Basile, K.C., DeGue, S., Jones, K., Freire, K., Dills, J., Smith, S.G., Raiford, J.L. (2016). STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv-prevention-technical-package.pdf