

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

My name is Kes. I am currently a junior in college, and I am testifying in support of HB3456.

I was assaulted only a couple of months ago, and I am still struggling to get the support I need to stay enrolled in school and hold my abuser accountable. I am so lucky that my college has confidential counseling services because I don't know how I would have survived the aftermath of my assault without them. But, every college campus in OR should have them. I'm witnessing first hand the devastating impacts on survivors I know personally attending institutions without these confidential counseling services. It is common to feel alone, scared, and suicidal after experiencing sexual violence. Not having a resource where you can be supported and connected to more resources as you navigate complex systems designed to re-traumatize you can be the difference between a survivor dropping out of school or not.

The high rates of sexual violence, especially at institution I attend is sickening. Within these rates, disabled students are disproportionately affected. Even with confidential counseling services, students who experience sexual violence are rarely receiving the support they need to help them heal and stay in school. This is in large part to the absence of annual prevention and awareness training for students, faculty, and staff on how to prevent sexual violence as well as respond in a trauma-informed ways when it happens.

HB3456, which was written by college students and student survivors to address the issues students are seeing on their own campuses, includes five main components designed to prevent campus sexual violence, ensure institutional transparency and increase support for student survivors.

I am currently experiencing the negative consequences on my physical and emotional health of not receiving all of the support I need after surviving a traumatic event. If the components of the bill were in place right now, I and my peers would have access to supportive resources and services, better understand our rights and options and feel more supported as we try to finish our degrees.

I am so excited to testify in support of HB3456 because I know firsthand that this bill will improve the lives of survivors like me and make campuses safer.

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!