



4110 SE Hawthorne Boulevard #503 | Portland, Oregon 97214
Admin (503) 222-6507 | Hotline (503) 222-6222 | Fax (503) 222-4754
We believe that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence.

April 6, 2023

Re: \$16 Million in the Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division Budget (SB 5514) for:

- **\$10 Million to the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (HB 2933) for confidential safety and support services**
- **\$6 Million to the Survivor Housing Fund (HB 3018) for housing assistance for survivors**

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

Our state will be healthier, stronger, and more resilient when everyone has what they need to thrive. That's why I support Fair Shot for All's [People's Budget](#)—a clear set of policies and investments that will lift up our communities and strengthen the state by using a racial, gender, and economic justice framework. HB 3018 (Survivor Housing Funds) and HB 2933 (Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund) are in this budget and essential to the on-going resources for survivors or domestic violence.

As a Domestic Violence agency, Raphael House of Portland has been providing safety and support services for survivors of domestic violence since 1977. Besides providing a confidential emergency shelter for these families we have many wrap around services, including supporting survivors with rental assistance and resources to help them maintain their safe housing. These resources have helped over 90% of the families we work with stay safely housed.

As Executive Director of Raphael House of Portland, I urge you to support full funding for HB 3018 (Survivor Housing Funds) and HB 2933 (Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund) in the Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division, to ensure continued access to vital life-saving community-based, culturally-specific, and Tribal Nation shelter and housing services for survivors of domestic or sexual violence and their children.

- **Funding for HB 2933 ensures that basic emergency shelter and safety planning advocacy services for survivors are not cut. These services save lives in crisis.**
- **Funding for HB 3018 ensures that housing advocacy and placement assistance for survivors is not cut. These services help survivors and their children move into or stay stable in safe housing as they transition out of emergency,**

The Survivors we serve each day rely on our agency to help them escape and find violence-free lives through shelter and housing resources. These families have just fled abusive partners in order to protect themselves and their children- often at the expense of losing everything; their belongings,

friends, family, neighbors, their jobs, and their homes. During this risky time, they undertake the monumental task of rebuilding their lives – including their income. They are constantly making the impossible choice-what necessity will they need to forgo to continue supporting themselves and their family; will it be food, medical needs, electricity, school needs for their children, or the rent.

Maintaining funding of HB 3018 (SHF) is critical in allowing domestic and sexual violence programs- across the state to continue responding to both the imminent danger of violence and the often- imminent threat of becoming houseless. These funds allow agencies like ours to provide individualized assistance and emergency funds for those who need to move for safety when fleeing an abusive partner, or who need help with housing searches, application processes, landlord negotiations, and tenant education.

We also know that preventing loss of housing in an emergency – as we're able to do with these funds – is vastly less expensive and disruptive to families than the cost of supporting in the aftermath of houselessness, when they must start over completely. Helping families to maintain their stability is not only life-changing, but also more fiscally sound and efficient.

HB 2933 (ODSVS) ensures on-going funding which is the only State general fund source of support for critical and life-saving services such as safety planning, providing shelter, and confidential trauma-informed advocacy for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking. The need for these supportive services continues to grow in the wake of the pandemic and many organizations, like ours, are already challenged to meet community need in the face of staffing shortages, lack of funding, and other obstacles.

We know first-hand that investing in the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) will help programs across the state – including Raphael House of Portland – continue to provide necessary and life-saving services to survivors and their children.

In closing, we are asking you to support the Governor's strategic decision to use all available current resources to invest in these key priorities. Oregon's reserves are already healthy and strong. Rather than saving more for a future Rainy Day, we need to make investments now. We create widespread economic opportunity for all when we invest in access to safety and services for our communities.

I urge you to support full funding for HB 2933 and HB 3018 and the other policies and investments in the People's Budget and the Fair Shot Agenda. Growing and maintaining this funding is vital to the continuation of the life-saving services- including housing- offered to survivors and their children throughout Oregon.

Sincerely,



Emmy R Ritter, LCSW
Executive Director
Raphael House of Portland