



February 12, 2024

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee:

My name is Vanessa Timmons, the Executive Director of the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence (OCADSV). OCADSV was founded in 1978 and its membership is comprised of community-based organizations and tribal nation service providers that support survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking and trafficking. The Oregon Coalition supports its member programs throughout Oregon, including those that have seen firsthand the devastating effects of the current homelessness crisis and affordable housing shortage on survivors. SB 1530 would ensure adequate investment in rental assistance and eviction prevention, to prevent homelessness in Oregon, thus providing much needed stability to survivors and their families. To that end, I urge you to support SB 1530.

As research indicates, the most dangerous time for a survivor is when they leave a domestic abuse situation. As the risk of lethality and violence increases, so does the urgency to ensure there is a refuge to flee to- particularly for survivors with children, and/or who hold marginalized identities. A common tactic of abuse is to undermine a survivor's relationship with friends and family which limits their options to find safe housing through community connections. They may also face substantial barriers when seeking safe and affordable housing, particularly survivors from marginalized communities. Many survivors face an impossible decision between homelessness or returning to abusive homes.

Sexual and domestic violence is a significant risk factor that may lead to homelessness, which puts them at even higher risk of interpersonal violence. In the 17th Annual National Network to End Domestic Violence DV count for Oregon, 39% of requests that were unmet were due to lack of program resources for emergency shelter, hotels, motels, and other housing.

If supported, SB 1530 will provide vital support to survivors in Oregon while saving money in the long-term by preventing expenses related to responding to homelessness. SB 1530 also ensures young people are able to have stable school access and help create sustainable and equitable access to safe jobs and homes.

Creating more housing options for survivors is an essential preventative step to ensure that all Oregonians experiencing violence and abuse are empowered and able to seek and receive safe housing. For these reasons, I urge your support of SB 1530.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vanessa Timmons".

Vanessa Timmons, Executive Director
Oregon Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence