

Funding for Life-Saving Services for Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors

- **Policy Option Package 327:** Continue funding levels for Tribal and community-based programs providing confidential emergency shelter and critical safety services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking across the state (\$22 Million)
- **HB 3196:** Continue funding levels for interdisciplinary crime victim services programs at domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse programs across the state (\$18.5 Million)

Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kim Lax, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Hope & Safety Alliance to urge your support of funding for the specialized programs that support survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their children, as included in the Department of Justice Budget's POP 327 and in HB 3196.

I write to you from the perspective of someone who has worked for over seven years with Hope & Safety Alliance, where I oversee our housing and shelter programs and help coordinate partnerships across the community to support survivors. Every day, I witness firsthand the complex and courageous journeys of individuals and families escaping violence. We support them in finding safe shelter, stable housing, trauma-informed care, and the resources necessary to rebuild their lives. Our services are often the difference between safety and continued danger, between healing and ongoing trauma.

Stable and reliable funding for these programs is not just important, it is essential. The survivors we serve cannot wait for fluctuating grant cycles or last-minute budget decisions. They need immediate and sustained support, and so do the programs that serve them. We need to be able to plan, to hire and retain trained staff, and to be ready when a survivor calls needing help—because we may be their only lifeline. The Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division of the Department of Justice provides critical safety net services and programs that can quite literally save the lives of survivors and their children fleeing violence and seeking safety and security.

Thank you for your commitment to this work, and for recognizing the importance of ensuring survivors have access to the specialized services and support they need.

The Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division of the Department of Justice provides critical safety net services and programs that can quite literally save the lives of survivors and their children fleeing violence and seeking safety and security.

The two packages outlined below are of critical importance to the lives of survivors and their children:

Department of Justice Budget POP 327: ONGOING FUNDING TO STABILIZE CRITICAL SURVIVOR SERVICES PROGRAMS (\$22M)

Please ensure the inclusion of \$22 million in grant funding in the Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) of the Department of Justice for Tribal, culturally specific, and community-based programs to continue providing confidential services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking across the state. Without this investment into ongoing funding, programs will be forced to lay off staff and will have reduced capacity to provide critical life-saving safety and advocacy services for survivors and their children.

\$10 Million for ODSVS: These funds provide support for the network of confidential, trauma-informed, community-based and culturally-specific programs providing shelter, safety planning, hotline, and advocacy services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence (DSV) and their children across the state.

\$6 Million for the Survivor Housing Fund: Survivor Housing Funds allow DVSA service providers to empower survivors in the next step of accessing safety from violence. These funds increase the chances at long-term stability and safety for survivors and their children. As Oregon's housing affordability crisis continues to reach new peaks, the Survivor Housing Funds are necessary to make it possible for victims to escape the cycle of abuse, and to establish stability for themselves and their children.

\$6 Million for Children's Advocacy Centers: CACs are the state's mandated and unique resource for the assessment, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect and the associated trauma, in order to promote health and hope in children, youth, families, and communities.

These investments are necessary to continue current levels of survivor services that were finally brought up to baseline minimal access levels in 2019 thru one-time investments. In 2024, the Legislature recognized the importance of this increased capacity and unanimously passed HB 4140, which stated that these funds are to be considered current service level moving forward. If these investments are not continued, survivor services in communities across the state will suffer significant cuts. POP #327 cements the continuation of these funds.

HB 3196: One-Time Funding to Prevent Cuts to Interdisciplinary Victim Services Programs (\$18.5 Million)

The Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is the primary source of federal grants for victim services, including services for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, attempted homicide, and other crimes. Oregon was notified of the 42% in federal funding cuts following the close of the 2024 short Session. We need a one-time investment to continue

important partnerships between service providers, prosecutors, law enforcement, and others serving victims of crime in every county in the state.

The work we do at Hope & Safety Alliance is rooted in our mission: to protect, shelter, and empower people impacted by domestic violence, and to promote equality and social change to end violence in our community. This mission is not abstract—it come to life every time we answer a crisis call, open the door to a family in need, or help a survivor take their first steps toward healing. Continued investment through POP 327 and HB 3196 is essential to sustaining this mission. With your support, we can ensure that survivors are not only safe today, but also empowered to build safer, more equitable futures for themselves and for the generations that follow.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,
Kim Lax
Executive Director
Hope & Safety Alliance