

April 15, 2025

Re: **Policy Option Package 327 and HB 3196**

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

I urge you to pass two pieces of legislation. The first is the Department of Justice Budget POP# 327 that will provide ongoing funding to stabilize critical survivor services programs (\$22M). This will maintain the same funding levels as in past years to ensure survivors of interpersonal violence can access the support they need and deserve, including crisis intervention, emergency shelter, safety planning, and advocacy.

The second is HB 3196, which will backfill VOCA funding (\$18.5M). Federal legislators are actively working on a sustainable fix for VOCA (H.R. 909), which has bipartisan support and, at last count, 148 co-sponsors. This one-time investment will ensure that when crime victims turn to agencies and systems providers for support, help will be there.

In my work as a youth advocate, I see the impact of services on the lives of survivors. We provide violence prevention education in K-12 schools throughout Clackamas County. After these presentations, students sometimes disclose their own experiences of harm and share that they didn't know that it was abuse or have the language to express what was happening. In response, we have co-located youth advocates in school-based health centers across the county for youth to receive essential services such as safety planning, systems navigation, resource connection, and trauma-informed emotional support. Reducing barriers to services by being in schools is critical for youth survivors, who often have less agency and resources to access these life-saving services.

For example, a teacher connected me to a youth survivor of sexual abuse. This youth was in foster care, had a significant trauma background, and was very distrustful of adults. Being able to meet with a confidential advocate gave them the space to safely disclose the harm and receive support with their criminal case. After a year of working together, they were able to stand in front of the court and give a powerful victim impact statement. Through services, this youth was also able to access resources such as mental health counseling, housing, and community-building opportunities with other youth impacted by violence.

I urge you to vote in favor of POP# 327 and HB 3196. These funds are crucial for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Thank you for your support and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Holly Schorr
Resident of Portland, Oregon