

OREGON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE



SUPPORT SB 1570: ENSURE SAFE ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING

FEBRUARY 3, 2026

Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden and Members of the Senate Committee on Healthcare:

My name is Shannon Rose and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force to urge you to pass SB 1570, which will support access to critical medical services for all people seeking care in Oregon, especially for victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence and trafficking who are also immigrants.

Formed in 1999 by then Attorney General Hardy Meyers, the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (Oregon SATF) is a statewide, nongovernmental nonprofit. Our mission is to facilitate and support a collaborative, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence. **Oregon SATF coordinates the state Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Certification Commission (SCC) and statewide SANE training and workforce development program.** In this capacity, we work closely with emergency departments, advocates, health care providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, pediatric specialists, community programs, and hospital systems.

Through this work, we see the direct connection between a person's sense of safety and their willingness to seek medical care. That trust is essential not only for individual health, but also for Oregon's broader public safety system. When individuals fear that seeking medical care may expose them or their families to immigration consequences, they delay or avoid care. This not only leads to untreated injuries, but for victims and survivors of violence, also to missed opportunities for safety planning, and a diminished ability for multidisciplinary teams to respond effectively to violence. SB 1570 helps ensure that hospitals remain places where people can seek treatment safely and without fear.

Through our statewide work, Oregon SATF hears concerns from emergency departments, forensic nurses, advocates, and community-based partners, which include:

- Survivors leaving the emergency department before receiving care or evidence collection due to fear of legal or safety repercussions.
- Patients declining to speak with nurses, advocates, or law enforcement because they are unsure what information hospitals might share with immigration officials.
- Hospital staff uncertain how to respond when an immigration officer appears without clear documentation.
- Inconsistent policies between facilities, creating unnecessary risk for both patients and staff.
- Unique vulnerabilities in rural communities, where alternative care options and culturally specific resources are limited.

SB 1570 addresses these issues by establishing clear, trauma-informed expectations for how facilities handle immigration enforcement. Its provisions align with HIPAA, Oregon's Sanctuary Promise Act, and nationally recognized standards for patient privacy and safety.

Survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and trafficking, particularly those who are immigrants and mixed-status families, are disproportionately deterred from seeking care when immigration enforcement is perceived as present, unpredictable, or unregulated. When they avoid medical settings out of fear, the consequences are significant:

- Injuries may go untreated
- Evidence may go undocumented
- Offenders may remain unidentified
- Community health and safety is weakened

These outcomes undermine Oregon's efforts to respond to violence and protect vulnerable populations.

SB 1570 also supports the health care workforce. Nurses, physicians, social workers, advocates, and security teams need clear policy direction when faced with unexpected or sensitive encounters involving federal authorities. The bill provides the structure necessary for hospitals to respond lawfully, ethically, consistently, and in a way that prioritizes

patient safety.

By creating uniform expectations across both urban and rural facilities, SB 1570 enhances the stability and coherence of Oregon's health care system.

Ultimately, SB 1570 strengthens Oregon's public safety ecosystem, supports trauma-informed medical care, and ensures that all people- regardless of immigration status- can access essential health services without fear. It protects survivors, health care workers, and the integrity of Oregon's hospitals as places of healing, safety, and trust.

Immediately following this testimony, I am including a two-page summary report from The Alliance for Immigrant Survivors titled "Fear and Silence: 2025 Insights From Advocates for Immigrant Survivors." This report further supports the need for SB 1570 and the unique barriers that immigrant survivors face when in need of medical care, law enforcement responses, and advocacy.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon Rose".

Shannon Rose
Executive Director
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force

Fear and Silence:

2025 Insights from Advocates for Immigrant Survivors

In the spring of 2025, the Alliance for Immigrant Survivors (AIS) surveyed over 170 advocates and attorneys nationwide to better understand the current experiences, needs, and lived realities of immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking. The survey results make clear that immigrant survivors overwhelmingly fear that reaching out to police or appearing in court to address abuse could lead to deportation.

Abusive family members and perpetrators of crime are well aware of this fear and often take advantage of it. They use a person's lack of legal immigration status as a tool of power and control, threatening deportation to keep victims silent. As a result, Congress has enacted laws with bipartisan support to protect crime victims, such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA).

But today, new policies, protocols and guidance make it harder for survivors to get the help they need. This includes involving local law enforcement in federal immigration actions, and enforcing immigration laws at courthouses. These actions go against the purpose of laws meant to protect survivors. They give abusers more power, putting victims in danger, and making entire communities less safe.



75.6%

of advocates reported that immigrant survivors have concerns about contacting the police.

An advocate shared that one survivor was afraid to go to the hospital and report abuse to the police after she was assaulted. She waited two days after the incident and went to the hospital only after her immigration attorney assured her it was safe. She had a broken nose and orbital bone.

One advocate shared that seeing a trafficking victim with no criminal record detained by ICE is:



Absolutely making people too afraid to speak to the police, making advocates second-guess whether it's a safe thing to advise."

Immigrant survivors are also more concerned and fearful of police in general:



Most of the immigrant survivors that I currently work with are fearful to leave their homes, drive or be in public spaces as these are all ways that they could be picked up by ICE."

70.3%

of advocates report that immigrant survivors have concerns about going to court for a matter related to their abuser/offender.

Advocates report:

Survivors have been expressing concern about whether ICE will be in the courtroom.



An **abuser's ability to threaten to contact ICE** about an upcoming court hearing is a **powerful tool in their toolbelt of control** right now."



An immigrant survivor with pending asylum and U visa applications chose not to renew her restraining order because she does not want to risk that ICE agents will be at or near the courthouse. This survivor had previously renewed her protection order three times."



There has been a decrease in restraining order requests with survivors telling advocates they do not want to go to court."

50%

of advocates report that immigrant survivors who had concerns about contacting the police or going to court **ultimately chose not to** due to fear.

Immigrant Survivors worry about encountering immigration enforcement, the potential impact of law enforcement contact on their immigration status, not being understood or taken seriously due to language barriers, and have anxiety about facing their abuser in court without adequate protection or support.



One survivor we worked with did not call the police when her abuser stalked and assaulted her. She specifically **feared that her abuser would disclose her immigration status to the police as retaliation if she called them for help.**"



Fear of retaliation from their abusers, who often leverage threats of deportation, plays a significant role in an immigrant survivor's decision to remain silent. This fear-driven inaction leaves many trapped in unsafe situations."



79.7%

of advocates report an increase in immigration-related questions from survivors since November 2024.



There is an increase in inquiries about long-pending applications. Even Legal Permanent Residents and naturalized survivors are fearful of deportation and scared that they are at risk."



The [Alliance for Immigrant Survivors \(AIS\)](#) is a national network of advocates and allies dedicated to defending and advocating for policies that ensure immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other gender-based abuses have access to life-saving protections that all survivors of violence deserve.