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## Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

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**Testimony in support of HB 2750  
House Committee on Judiciary  
February 28, 2019**

Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and Members of the Committee,  
On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF), **I am pleased to submit this letter in support of HB 2750.**

The Sexual Assault Task Force is a private, non-profit, non-governmental statewide agency with over 100 multi-disciplinary members appointed by Attorney General Rosenblum. Members serve as advisors on 1 of 8 subcommittees including: Campus, Criminal Justice, Legislative & Public Policy, Medical-Forensic, Men's Engagement, Offender Management, Prevention Education, and Victim Response.

Our mission is to advance a multi-disciplinary, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence in Oregon.

SATF believes that violence is preventable and that everyone plays a role; law enforcement's role in prevention is to create systems that are safe and predictable for victims to feel supported coming forward. I think it is important to acknowledge that Oregon already has a much more complete, consistent and trauma informed response than many states in our county. However, like I heard from colleagues from Norway who recently spoke at the Justice Reinvestment Summit, "Be proud, but never satisfied."

As the Criminal Justice Coordinator for SATF, I have been able to develop and implement a curriculum that focuses on trauma-informed, sexual assault investigation and prosecution. Our curriculum includes: sexual assault dynamics, neurobiology of trauma, implicit bias, trauma-informed interview techniques and best practices, a review of case law, overcoming the consent defense, and community/partner relationship building and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART).

The overall goal of our training<sup>1</sup>, is to help participants be offender focused and survivor-centered, by providing practical, applicable skills, giving law enforcement and prosecutors the confidence to interact with victims and investigate and prosecute what are often complex and complicated cases.

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<sup>1</sup> Training Evaluation Feedback: "All great tools. All information will help me be a better investigator; so far all presenters have been great; I really liked the way bias was explained in a non-condemning way. Something I haven't experienced; the cadre of speakers was the best collaborative group I have ever experienced in my 20 years of law enforcement experience. The speakers were credible, well-organized, and dynamic; Overall a very good training. I would recommend to all law enforcement."

Trauma impacts every single part of an investigation - from evidence collection, to how victims present in an interview, and this carries through all the way to a trial. It is imperative that every discipline in our field has a foundational understanding of trauma for our systems' response to be truly effective. We know that every victim presents differently. Because of trauma, victims present with a variety of behaviors that may include: not making eye contact with first responders; not crying or appearing with a flat affect; laughing or appearing jovial; they may delay their disclosures and not recall details in a chronological order. During the experience of trauma, a victim's prefrontal cortex is not engaged, meaning they store memories in a different part of their brain. In order for investigators and prosecutors to have the most successful interviews they can, it is important they know how to interview a victim to elicit these details.

We believe that HB2750 will allow Oregon to strengthen our response to victims of abuse and violence by:

1. Developing a model policy with the buy-in and input of multi-disciplinary partners. Communities that have strong community partnerships and survivor-centered, trauma-informed policies in place, serve victims in ways that have positive measurable outcomes. For example, we saw a 116-145% increase in victims reporting in Jackson County, via the YHOP program, because victims were given control over the reporting process and were met with law enforcement trained in trauma-informed care.
2. Implementing pilot programs in strategic areas of the state will allow for the development and implementation of training that speaks to the unique needs of communities. We appreciate that counties will be able to be responsive to their own community, based on the resources available to them, and that these grant funds can enhance their capacity to offer trauma-informed responses to victims.
3. Implementing trauma-informed training into the curriculum at DPSST supports their current update to the 16-week Basic Academy for new officers. We've appreciated the opportunity to work with DPSST to update our 8-hour sexual assault-specific training, and believe that HB2750 will continue to support our shared goal with DPSST.

For these reasons, we urge your support of HB 2750.

Respectfully,



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