



**Testimony of Ricardo Lujan-Valerio, Policy Associate  
In Support of HB 2750 – Trauma Informed Practices Act  
House Judiciary Committee  
February 28, 2019**

Chair Williamson and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon<sup>1</sup> supports HB 2750, The Trauma Informed Practices Act, which would provide law enforcement agencies across the state with the tools necessary to effectively and responsibly interact with victims suffering from trauma.

**Victims are often reluctant to engage the system because they believe that it is complicated, lengthy, and trauma-inducing.** The ACLU conducted a national survey that found victims highly recommended improvements in police training.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the study showed that greater partnerships between police and community-based organizations that provide support to victims greatly benefited those that sought help from law enforcement.

**Police involvement can also trigger collateral consequences that make victims think twice about reaching out for help.** Nearly 90 percent of survey respondents said that contact with the police sometimes or often initiated loss of housing, employment, or welfare benefits. Some reported that victims themselves face arrest when reaching out to the police, particularly if they have a criminal record. Officers should be afforded guidance to better address such adverse consequences.

**When non-trauma informed practices negatively affect the response that survivors receive from police, most survivors stop reaching out to the police for help altogether.** Law enforcement experts from across the nation have praised trainings and policies similar to HB 2750.<sup>3</sup> The Trauma Informed Practices Act will create a model policy that will assist officers with understanding the effects of systemic trauma.

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<sup>1</sup> The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 45,000 members and supporters statewide.

<sup>2</sup> [Responses from the Field: Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Policing.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Law Enforcement Letter to 2017 Policing Week Bills.](#)

**Trauma sensitivity or trauma informed trainings can help officers identify individuals showing signs of trauma related behaviors**, which may include: aggression; difficulty processing information; impulsiveness; heightened fight, flight, or freeze response; and hypersensitivity to noise or physical contact. According to law enforcement experts, training can help law enforcement avoid interpreting such behaviors as requiring more aggression or use of force and, instead, guide officers to respond in a more informed and appropriate manner.<sup>4</sup>

For these reasons, the ACLU of Oregon urges you to support HB 2750. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

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<sup>4</sup> *Id at 3.*