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**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2750  
Before the House Judiciary Committee**

**February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Chair Williamson, Vice-Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2750, which would complement the state's impressive efforts to establish best practices in responding to the needs of crime victims.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. A significant number of our clients come to us for help as they are struggling to escape or recover from domestic or sexual violence. Domestic and sexual violence are serious public health and safety issues in our state. Victims suffer great psychological, emotional, and physical trauma, which have long-term impact on their lives. Domestic and sexual violence greatly contribute to the vulnerability of our clients, and further trap them in poverty and crisis. OLC is committed to supporting the coordinated community response necessary to help prevent this violence, and to helping victims in crisis move towards the safety and stability they need for recovery in the aftermath of crime.

Survivors of traumatic events experience a wide variety of impacts that can have both immediate and long-lasting consequences. Often, survivors experience memory loss, hypervigilance, disorientation, and other impacts that if not understood in context can lead observers to make false assumptions and conclusions about the victim. These impacts are verified health consequences of trauma and it is critical that our system responders be well informed.

Law enforcement plays a vital role in the way a crime victim experiences the criminal justice system, in two important ways:

- 1) The survivor's perception of the system. Often, a law enforcement officer may be the first person to interact with a victim in the aftermath of a traumatic event. And law enforcement officers, investigators, and others have continuing interaction with crime survivors throughout the pendency of a case. If the victim receives trauma-informed response, they are more likely to feel heard and respected during the process.
- 2) The quality of the criminal justice process. If officers are trained in trauma-response, interviews and investigations are less likely to be thrown off course and more likely to effectively result in the gathering of important evidence. In this way, the process is more likely to result in appropriate accountability for perpetrators and safety protection for survivors.

HB 2750 was collaboratively developed with public safety partners and survivor advocates to take an important first step in setting best practices for statewide response. The bill tasks DPSST, in consultation with DOJ and other partners, to develop model protocols.

The bill provides funding for pilot project implementation of protocols. HB 2750 will help lead Oregon forward and improve the quality of response to victims of crimes.

For the above reasons, we urge support of this bill, and thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Sybil Hebb