

March 12, 2019

Re: Letter in support of SB 790

Dear Chair Gelser, Co-Chair Heard, and Members of the Senate Human Resources Committee,

My name is Jayne Downing, and I am the Executive Director of the Center for Hope & Safety (formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service). I am writing to you today to encourage your strong support for SB 790, the initiative to increase funding for Individual Development Accounts in Oregon.

The Center for Hope & Safety serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion and Polk Counties. Last year, we had more than 26,000 contacts to our program. Many of the survivors we work with struggle to start new lives free of violence.

Victims usually come to us with the clothes on their backs, and not much more. While in our confidential shelter, we provide everything for them – food, clothing, hygiene items, and much more. Survivors are literally often starting their lives over from scratch. Think of starting over again at 20, 30, 40, 50 or even older? At CHS, we help survivors start the hard work of stabilizing and rebuilding their lives.

Most of the survivors we work with do ultimately gain employment, even if they have not been allowed to work before by their abusive partners. Unfortunately, it is usually on the low end of the pay scale due to the lack of past job experience. The ability to increase their economic stability and see how they can improve their situations through Individual Development Accounts, could change the life trajectory for survivors and their children.

CHS has long dreamed of being able to offer survivors the opportunity to participate in an IDA program. We know what a tremendous difference this could make for their futures – the ability to save for deposits, first and last months rent, a car, college, or even their own home! Passage of SB 790 will provide new resources for programs, like ours, to be able to work with the IDA Providers to establish IDA programs in our area.

Please support SB 790 for all the individuals working to rebuild their lives after trauma and abuse. When I think of how the lives of families we serve could be changed through an increase in IDAs, it makes me truly excited for the future!

Thank you for your consideration and all you do for Oregonians.

Center for HOPE & SAFETY



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

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because everyone deserves a life free of violence