

Dear Chair Williamson, Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Julia Tycer and I am the Prevention Education Coordinator at Raphael House of Portland. Raphael House has provided life-saving shelter and support to domestic violence survivors in Multnomah County for more than 40 years. In 2006, our Prevention Education Program was established to address the underlying causes of intimate partner violence and prevent future abuse.

Through our work with both youth and adults, we aim to build a community that not only recognizes domestic and sexual violence and supports those who experience it, but is also invested in changing cultural norms and promoting consent to create a healthier and safer future for everyone.

I urge you to consider our important work when deciding to support HB 2657. Continued funding and prioritization for prevention is vital, and the education we offer in schools and throughout the community keeps youth from later utilizing emergency interventions and suffering the trauma of relationship violence.

Community prevention efforts like ours promote equitable relationships, address how to recognize dynamics of domestic and sexual violence, teach bystander intervention skills, and promote a culture of consent. Raphael House runs one of the most robust prevention programs in the area, and we work with thousands of middle and high school students, adults, businesses, and community members each year to create a community that prioritizes safety and consent over violence and harassment.

Our school-based curriculum is developed to meet the standards and benchmarks for sexual health education set by the Oregon Department of Education, and also to help schools achieve goals set by the Healthy Teen Relationships Act (HTRA). This requires all Oregon schools to adopt policies and programs addressing teen dating violence. We consistently update our curriculum based on evaluation from students and participants, as well as state guidelines and best practices.

I urge you to support this bill and show you care about and prioritize preventing the youth in our communities from experiencing harm in their relationships. I deeply appreciate your work and the time and attention you will be giving this very important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Julia Tycer