



Good Morning and thank you for your time as you consider the importance of House Bill 2657 – the Comprehensive Prevention Bill.

My name is Emmy Ritter and I am the new Executive Director of Raphael House of Portland. I have been part of this team for almost 10 years and have been working in the domestic violence field for almost three decades.

For over 40 years, Raphael House of Portland has helped domestic violence survivors and their families find safety, hope, and independence.

Commented [JSNW1]: Our mission is pretty clunky when read out loud. I don't think we need this.

We were first compelled to begin prevention work based on the Multnomah County Domestic Violence Fatality Review's most prominent recommendation - in order to prevent future fatalities we, as a community, needed to prevent violence by educating our children.

Over the past 13 years, our Prevention Education program has been providing free comprehensive education on dating violence, healthy relationships, and practicing consent for students throughout Portland area school districts.





Our trained domestic and sexual violence advocates teach developmentally- and age-appropriate curriculum to both middle and high school students that aligns with Oregon Standards and Benchmarks for Health Education.

Our school-based programming, like others across the State, covers topics such as equity, practicing consent, respecting boundaries, identifying abuse, and exploitation. This curriculum incorporates strategies for effective prevention of dating and sexual violence as well as trauma-informed support for students affected by those types of violence.

Last year, we reached 3,600 students through our prevention work.

The Healthy Teen Relationship Act (HTRA) was passed in January 2013 (Oregon House Bill 4077) mandating Oregon school districts adopt policies and programs addressing teen dating violence.

Raphael House of Portland helped to draft and pass HTRA, which is a solid ground floor for schools in helping their students develop safe and equitable relationships.

We have also built a sustainable model through our school-based programming that can help individual schools institute the framework laid out by the HTRA mandates.

Commented [JSNW2]: Emmy: I don't know if you want this detail in here?





Yet HTRA does not have funding attached and many Oregon schools are still struggling to meet the requirements. As a committed violence prevention and intervention agency we have continually pieced together outside funding to help schools meet these requirements.

The need and demand for this programming from local school communities far outpaces our ability to fund it on our own.

Our vision is that prevention in schools lays a foundation for preventing future violence, creating 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 community for everyone.

I expect that is what we all want.

Investing \$3 million in a dedicated funding source ensures greater capacity for programs like Raphael House to create, build, and continue to implement violence prevention education. Please invest in House Bill 2657 – the Comprehensive Prevention Bill.

