



Domestic Violence Clinic
University of Oregon School of Law
PO Box 10486, Eugene, OR 97440

March 31, 2019

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education
c/o Co-Chairs Senator Lew Frederick and Representative Susan McLain
Submitted electronically

RE: HB 5024, Higher Education Coordinating Committee (HECC) budget bill

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing this letter to support continued funding for the University of Oregon Domestic Violence Clinic (DV Clinic). A key factor in my decision to attend the University of Oregon School of Law was the ability to take the DV Clinic. I am passionate about seeking justice for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and I knew that the opportunity to learn in a hands-on environment would make me a better legal advocate for survivors. As a law student working with low-income victims and survivors of domestic violence, I saw just how challenging the legal system can be for these individuals and the difference being represented made in increasing a survivor's chance of accessing justice.

My experience as a law student made me jump at the chance to become the first DV Clinic post-graduate fellow. My fellowship increased the DV Clinic's capacity to serve survivors, including University of Oregon student survivors. When my fellowship ended, I continued my work as a staff attorney at the DV Clinic, and this semester I took on the responsibility of teaching the Domestic Violence Protective Order Clinic. In this capacity I supervise certified law students in taking on legal representation of low-income clients in civil protection order case. I also instruct a weekly seminar focused on domestic violence law and the litigation skills needed to represent survivors.

The Domestic Violence Clinic plays a unique and important role in increasing access to justice in Oregon, because we not only provide critical legal services to low-income survivors, but we also shape the next generation of lawyers, by imbuing in them the legal skills and passion to continue this work after law school. It is an incredible privilege to serve survivors and teach law students to do the same, but because our office is predominantly grant funded there is trepidation in not knowing if our funding will continue. The continuity of the HECC funding makes it viable for me to continue working for the DV Clinic, which is why it is my sincere hope that this committee will recognize the incredible value the DV Clinic offers to not only survivors of domestic and sexual violence, but also the law students at Oregon's only publicly funded law school. Therefore, I respectfully ask that you continue to fund the Domestic Violence Clinical Legal Education Fund.

Sincerely,

Katarzyna (Kasia) Mlynski, Staff Attorney
University of Oregon, Domestic Violence Clinic