

**In support of HB 2006**  
**Funding for Housing Assistance and Services for Survivors**  
Jayne Downing, Executive Director

# Center for **HOPE & SAFETY**

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Williamson and Wilson and members of the committee:

My name is Jayne Downing, and for the last 21 years I have been the Executive Director of the Center for Hope & Safety (CHS). CHS serves thousands of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion and Polk Counties. CHS provides a 24-hour crisis line, emergency confidential shelter, emergency transportation, support groups, intensive case management, and many more supportive services to thousands of victims and survivors each year.



*Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service*

Last year alone, our program had more than 26,000 contacts from our community and throughout Oregon. Our emergency shelter has 20 beds, but at times we have had to place families on cots and in sleeping bags to not turn unsafe families away. We have “stretched” shelter capacity to make space for up to 32 children and adults at one time.

Our staff works hard to keep survivors from going from shelter to shelter, so over the last five years the length of stay in our shelter has tripled! One of the biggest challenges victims face is securing affordable long-term housing. Survivors need support and advocacy to overcome barriers as they work to rebuild their lives free of violence.

The Housing Navigators under HB 2006 would allow Domestic and Sexual Violence Service providers to work with survivors to identify and secure housing once they leave our shelters. Housing Navigators would provide a highly-trained advocate to focus their energies on assisting survivors with filling out paperwork, accompany them to meet with landlords, and work through any barriers to gaining and maintaining long-term stable housing.

The supportive funding and services sought under HB 2006, would allow us to strengthen and expand the services our program, and other shelter programs, provide to those that are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to violence in our community. HB 2006 would increase the safety net for some of the most vulnerable families in Oregon.

We know you are all keenly aware of the need for shelter and housing in Oregon and that you face challenges for where to place finite resources. We hope HB 2006 will be one of the places you decide is critical for Oregon families facing domestic and sexual violence.

Thank you for all your efforts to make our state a safe and vibrant place to live!

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*because everyone deserves a life free of violence*