



SAVING GRACE

Safety • Hope • Healing

- Est. 1977 -

Offering safety, hope, and healing to survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual assault and engages Central Oregon to build life free from violence.

saving-grace.org

To: Members of the House Judiciary

From: Cassi MacQueen

Date: March 3, 2021

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2575: Trauma Informed Practices Act

To Chair Bynum and Members of the Committee:

Saving Grace, Central Oregon's domestic violence and sexual assault intervention program, serves a tri-county region encompassing Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson Counties. The organization serves over 4,000 individuals annually, providing crisis intervention, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, hospital response for domestic and sexual violence survivors, and supervised visitation and exchange for families that have experienced domestic or sexual violence. Operating in Central Oregon for 44 years, Saving Grace has served thousands of survivors who have interfaced with law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Saving Grace works closely with law enforcement in all three counties, where crisis intervention and follow-up ensure victim safety and offender accountability. Survivors of abuse who are engaged with the criminal justice are often deeply traumatized, fearful of potential retaliation from their abuser, and need to know they are safe to share what may likely be the worst moment of their lives. With a significant Latino population and part of Warm Springs Indian Reservation in our region, all survivors must feel that law enforcement understands and respects their culture and lived experience.

The manner in which law enforcement approaches domestic and sexual violence investigations are of utmost importance. Questions must be asked in a way that cannot be construed as "victim blaming" or casting doubt upon the survivor's experience. Even when well-intentioned, without proper training in trauma-informed investigative techniques, survivors at times feel shut down and fearful of going forward with an interview (or with prosecution) if they feel threatened or blamed in this process.

*"I truly believe that each and every one of you are angels and have saved my life."
- Survivor & Saving Grace client*

1004 NW Milwaukee Ave.
Suite 100
Bend, OR 97703

Office: (541) 382-9227
24-Hour Helpline: (541) 389-7021
info@saving-grace.org



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Saving Grace strongly supports HB 2575 to ensure law enforcement officers receive training in trauma-informed investigative techniques. A partnership with Oregon Dept of Public Safety Standards and Training would ensure consistent delivery of this training and pave the way for all officers throughout the state to receive this critical training piece. Please consider Saving Grace an advocate and partner to ensure HB 2575 is enacted to ensure best practices on trauma-informed investigations become the standard throughout our state. Please feel free to contact me at Cassi.m@saving-grace.org or 541-382-9227 if you would like to discuss further.

In Partnership,

Cassi MacQueen
Executive Director

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- Survivor & Saving Grace client*