

Dear Representatives,

Hello, my name is Esther Nelson. I am an Oregon Native, as well as Founder and CEO of Safety Compass, an Oregon based non-profit serving sex-trafficking survivors. I am writing to you today in enthusiastic support of HB 2575. I am hopeful about the positive impact it would have on Oregonians, particularly the most vulnerable among us. I am proud to live in a state that is considering investing in education for law enforcement, as method of advancing equity in justice and our collective system's response to trauma victims in our communities.

Passing bill 2575 will create a ripple effect of increased success in terms of Law Enforcement's ability to effectively, compassionately, engage with trauma victims, to train future generations of first responders and community partners, to institutionalize the knowledge, build more informed policies, and ultimately alter the entire culture of Law Enforcement for the better.

As a crime victim's advocate, I work with trauma survivor's every day. I understand how stressful it can be to interface with the criminal justice system and how much of a difference those first responders can make in someone's life and healing, when they do a great job. In my experience law enforcement are usually hungry for knowledge and are passionate about doing the best job they can to ensure that justice is carried out to the fullest extend possible. Having trained thousands of law enforcement across the nation, I have found Oregon's Law Enforcement to be some of the most educated, trauma informed personnel in the country (as evidenced in their education rates). Their current level of knowledge translates to effective policing but there is always room for improvement. I have also had the privilege to witness the positive impacts on victims and survivors, when whole criminal justice institutions become more trained on the neuro-biology of trauma, become more trauma-informed, and begin to extend this increased knowledge into the field as they work with vulnerable populations of citizens and people who have been traumatized. I have personally witnessed the decreased burden of re-traumatization to victims, when Law Enforcement personnel make shifts to do more trauma-informed interviews, review and alter policies, work environment, and processes. This in turn advances positive relations between the general public and Law Enforcement, paving the way for increased access to protection, support, disclosures of additional crimes, and ultimately a reduction in crime and harm.

Those in the most power have a responsibility to operate from an informed position, with the goal of doing to most good and the least harm, pursuant to their role as public stewards. We have a responsibility to provide opportunities for educational advancement for those in power and I believe wholeheartedly that with increased understanding, comes an increase in justice for victims of crime.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please support HB 2575.

Sincerely,

Esther Nelson Craig