



PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFETY & JUSTICE

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Testimony in Support of HB 2575

By Amy Davidson, Partnership for Safety & Justice

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amy Davidson, and I'm the Crime Survivor Program Director at Partnership for Safety & Justice. We advocate for public safety and criminal justice policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both.

On behalf of Partnership for Safety and Justice, I request your support for HB 2575, which would train public safety professionals in trauma-informed approaches so that they can more effectively support and advocate for people who have experienced trauma.

We know that when the system responds to harm in a trauma-informed way, survivors feel safer and they're more likely to engage with the criminal justice system. This shift is an important one, because when victims and survivors feel safe enough to reach out, direct service providers and law enforcement have a better understanding of how to help.

Based on the 2019 National Crime Victimization survey, less than half (*only 41%*) of violent victimizations were reported to police nationally.

(https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv19_sum.pdf) That's a fail by any standard. It's not a stretch to at least partially correlate this number with inadequate understanding of trauma on the part of responders such as law enforcement.

I worked directly with survivors for 15 years in Central Oregon. I know how impactful a trauma-informed response can be for crime survivors. Sadly, I also know far too many stories of survivors who felt they weren't believed because they couldn't immediately share the exact details of the events, or they couldn't recount them in a linear fashion as Rep. Williams and others have noted earlier – a very common occurrence when someone experiences trauma. Often, survivors told me they felt they weren't believed because the people responding to their incident didn't understand the complex and historical trauma specific to their culture. Without that context, it would be difficult for any responder to adequately understand what had happened and how to assess for safety.

When responders can account for culture, they can more fully understand the extent of the trauma that has occurred. This allows us to recognize violence as both an individual experience and also a collective one. It can be both historical and situational. It's important that we explore more equitable means of responding to harm in ways that don't cause further trauma, particularly to communities of color.

Another consideration is that investigators are largely trained in how to interview *suspects*, not victims. By training public safety groups and agencies about trauma and its impacts, we can equip professionals with the information and skills they need to create a safer and more supportive setting for crime victims, for witnesses, and others who are impacted by trauma.

For this reason, we support HB 2575, and we hope you will, too.