
Multnomah County Commissioner, District 2

March 23, 2021

Members of the House Judiciary Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2825

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Power and members of the committee,

I am the Multnomah County Commissioner for District 2, representing North, Northeast, and parts of East Portland. I'm also the co-chair for both the Multnomah County Gateway Center for Domestic Violence Advisory Council and Multnomah County's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team. I write today in support of HB 2825.

Intimate partner or family abuse is often not what is portrayed in the media or on TV. It can be physical or sexual abuse, but it can also be non-physical abuse such as coercion, fraud, manipulation, isolation, emotional and mental abuse, or involve threats to the individual or family members. All of these forms of abuse can affect a survivor and create long-lasting trauma.

Many people who are survivors of long-term trauma continue to cope with those effects throughout their life. Symptoms often are manifested in the way they respond to normal life stressors, the inability to engage in everyday activities, anxiety, flashbacks caused by triggers, and harmful behaviors or thinking. This trauma often is not fully understood by the person being abused.

With that in mind, it is not surprising when we see people who have been abused get to a point where they feel they must fight back to protect themselves or their family. The fight or flight response often activated during their abuse, kicks in and leaves them in a state of confusion while fighting for their life. Also, it is not uncommon for abusers to force their victims to commit crimes or engage in behavior that they otherwise would not if not for the abuse. Survivors are often put between a rock and a hard place when making choices to keep themselves and their children safe.

We know from a survey done by the Oregon Justice Center in 2017/18, that over 60% of women

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incarcerated experienced abuse in their relationship, and 44% report that the relationship contributed to their arrest. These numbers show that a vast majority of women incarcerated have experienced long-term abuse and exposure to violence. There is a relationship between that abuse and the circumstances that led to their being in court; and HB 2825 is a common-sense bill that allows that relationship to be considered at sentencing.

I urge you to support HB 2825 and protect those who have experienced abuse from further trauma of incarceration when protecting themselves from their abuser.



Susheela Jayapal