

March 26, 2021

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Power, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Claire Rood and I am a resident of House District 45, Senate District 23. You will find my story¹ in the footnotes of other written testimony, but I want to make sure the record reflects my support for HB 2400 in my own words, too.

I was the victim of a sexual assault in 2014. I filed a police report and there was an investigation that left me more traumatized and demoralized than the assault itself. In 2015, I requested a copy of my police report. In 2016, I wrote a winning appeal after a detective denied my record request. In it, I explained:

I want... an unredacted copy of my sexual assault police report because I want to evaluate my experience with police. Most of the time, when we experience trauma, the incident is not documented for our (and our therapist's) reference. But my traumatic experience exists on multiple media, yet my local government is obliged to keep the record from me? A police officer gave me posttraumatic stress disorder. So the more I attempt to work through that stress, the more my mind blacks out those memories. I do not understand why [the] Portland Police Bureau is intent on holding hostage my personal story. [Police] interference with and denial of my public records request strikes me as unusually personal. I just want to move forward with my life. I don't understand why I have to rattle everyone [across city and state offices] -- all of whom are apparently able to review my records without my consent -- just to get a copy of this report. It feels like my city's entire government is becoming part of my sexual assault.

Getting my police report was *the most pivotal* point in my healing. That case file is so important to me that I will probably be interred with it. It allowed me to let go of the fear and shame that often accompanies sexual assault. It helped me understand what went wrong in the investigation. The written report, for example, reveals errors made by the uniformed officer who originally took my statement. And for a couple more examples: The detective's notes show how personal biases can influence the direction of an investigation; timestamps on electronic evidence seem to expose a flaw in police technology. And there are many more benefits that I am not ready to speak out about yet.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 2400. Of course, if you vote against it, I will be as persistent with the legislature as I was with the police bureau. Let's skip all that and give survivors access to their records.

I am happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,
-Claire Rood

¹ Samantha Swindler, "A six-month fight for a police report," THE OREGONIAN (Oct. 23, 2016), available at https://www.oregonlive.com/portland/2016/10/a_six-month_fight_for_a_police.html