

March 30, 2021

Dear Co-Chair Leiber, Co-Chair Nosse, and members of the Joint Subcommittee of Human Services:

I am writing in support of HB 5529, and the recommended budget for the Oregon Department of Human Services for the 2021-2023 biennium. Specifically, the DVSA Co-located Advocate Program budget, the Temporary Assistance to Domestic Violence Survivors (TA-DVS) budget, and the Survivor Investment Partnership (SIP) budget are of critical importance to our communities.

I am the Executive Director of the Center for Hope & Safety (CHS). CHS is a community-based program providing direct services to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. In our 47 years of operation, CHS has helped tens of thousands of survivors find safety through crisis intervention services on our hotline; sheltering services at our confidential, safe shelter; community education and outreach; and much more. Our mission is to provide survivors with options so they can make the best decision for themselves and their families on their way to finding a life free of violence.

One of the ways in which we support survivors in our community is through the Co-Located Advocate Program in partnership with ODHS. CHS Co-located Advocates provide confidential supportive services at ODHS Self-Sufficiency and Child Welfare offices in Marion County and Polk Counties.

Approximately a third of ODHS child welfare cases involve domestic or sexual violence. The risks due to violence have only escalated during this past year of the COVID pandemic. Successful work with ODHS clients who are at safety risk due to violence requires a trauma-informed, culturally specific, and survivor-centered approach. In times of crisis like the ones that we experienced last year, and the one we are continuing to experience, a strong response to aid those who are most impacted is critical.

Domestic Violence Co-Located Advocate Program: This program ensures that survivors who are ODHS-involved have access to confidential, survivor-centered services. Specialized domestic and sexual violence advocates can provide support to survivors, to help create individualized safety plans and access to a range of community services. This program is the only program specifically creating a link for ODHS-involved survivors to community supports that can support long-term safety.

Temporary Assistance to Domestic Violence Survivors: The TA-DVS provides critical one-time emergency financial assistance of up to \$1200 to low-income survivors of domestic violence seeking safety for themselves and their children. The program can pay for emergency transportation, motel vouchers, security locks, lock changes, clothing for a family who had to flee abuse, and other emergency expenses. Payments are made to third party vendors, for safety-related emergency services for the survivor. The program saves lives by making it possible for victims with children to escape immediate danger.

Survivor Investment Partnership (SIP), Policy Option Package #130: This policy option package proposes to invest \$10 million in funding to build upon the TA-DVS and Co-located Advocate programs, and to address inequities in access to services across the state. The SIP was developed in partnership with the Governor's office, Oregon Tribal Nations, and culturally-specific and community-based domestic and sexual violence service providers across Oregon. Funding for this program will ensure greater accessibility of advocacy services and meaningful financial support to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault including Tribal Nations, individuals without children, and vulnerable populations.

Center for HOPE & SAFETY



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

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because everyone deserves a life free of violence

The funding gives Tribal communities and culturally-specific organizations autonomy on how to administer their programs and provides survivors the ability to decide which supports they need to stay safe and maintain stability. In addition to serving survivors in a more culturally holistic way and providing resources for those who may be ineligible for the Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors (TA-DVS) Program, a portion of the funds will support the administrative costs of overseeing the program.

Most importantly, the SIP recognizes that Tribal Nations and culturally specific organizations know their communities best, and survivors know their circumstances best.

We strongly support the passage of HB 5529 so that survivors have access to culturally-specific and culturally-responsive, survivor-centered, and trauma-informed services to help access immediate and long-term safety from abuse.

Thank you for your time and all you do for survivors of violence in Oregon.

Sincerely,


Jayne Downing
Executive Director