



**Testimony in support of HB 2912  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Submitted by Kerry Naughton, Co-Director  
February 8, 2021**

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

My name is Kerry Naughton and I am the Co-Director of Oregon Abuse Advocates & Survivors in Service (OAASIS). OAASIS is a statewide organization that empowers communities to prevent child sexual abuse and help survivors live full, healthy, joyful lives. Our base is comprised of thousands of Oregonians—people who were sexually abused as children, survivors’ family members and loved ones, and community members who care about the safety, health, and well-being of survivors of child sexual abuse. We are working towards a future where all people experience a loving childhood free of abuse and trauma, and all relationships are based on respect, consent, and equity.

**We are pleased to support HB 2912, which improves the health and safety of Oregon communities by reauthorizing funding for Re\*Membering.** Re\*Membering provides reentry-focused civil legal services to women during incarceration and reduces barriers to a successful return to the community.

Women are the fastest growing prison population in the United States. For a majority of women who are incarcerated, the experiences that preceded their incarceration were filled with violence and trauma. A 2006 study found that 96% of juvenile female offenders in Oregon were sexually abused prior to entering prison; 76% of these young women were sexually or physically abused before they were 13 years old. Nationally, women in prison are twice as likely as women in the general population to report having been sexually or physically abused as children. This correlation is so common it’s often referred to as the “sexual abuse to prison pipeline.”

OAASIS’s work has taught us that people can heal from the trauma of child sexual abuse. This knowledge that people can heal is based on a scientific understanding of trauma and resiliency and the lived experiences of countless survivors. Time and again, we have learned from survivors that the response to child sexual abuse can be as impactful as the abuse itself. When the survivor is believed, heard, respected, given accurate information and trauma-informed support, and empowered to choose their own path toward health and healing, the survivor is better able to move from Post-Traumatic Stress to what neurobiologists call Post-Traumatic Growth.

But when survivors can’t access support, safety and healing can be far more difficult to achieve. Without support, survivors may try to numb the pain of sexual or physical abuse by self-medicating

with drugs or alcohol. Addiction can lead to other crimes and, ultimately, incarceration. While in prison, women are isolated from their communities and supportive members of their families. The time when a woman transitions back into the community can be a vulnerable experience.

Re\*Membering provides incarcerated women needed support as they reintegrate back into our communities across Oregon. The civil legal services help provide formerly-incarcerated women safety, stability, and connection. These services can help formerly-incarcerated women continue their healing journeys and give them a better ability to thrive.

**Re\*Membering has already done amazing work, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, that will impact communities statewide.** Since it began meeting with clients in late November 2019, Re\*Membering has served nearly 60 women, more than 55% identifying as BIPOC, addressing 1 to 6 different legal matters each; and has served women releasing to 20 different counties with 75% releasing outside the metropolitan tri-county (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas) area. **By passing HB 2912 and making a modest investment now in civil legal assistance during incarceration, Oregon can save taxpayer dollars and improve the health and safety of our families and communities.**

We hope you'll join us in supporting HB 2921. Thank you for your time and consideration.