



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
SAFETY & JUSTICE**

**Submitted to the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety
Monday, April 1, 2021**

**Testimony in Support of SB 5014
By Talia Gad, Communications Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice**

Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair Sollman, and Members of the Subcommittee,

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. For over 20 years, our work has promoted public safety with policies that keep families together, reduce racial disparities, and invest in communities across Oregon.

On behalf of Partnership for Safety & Justice, I respectfully request your support of SB 5014, which would increase funding to the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (ODSVS) Fund by \$10 million for the 2021-2023 biennium. In addition, we are also requesting an additional \$5 million to be directed toward the Housing Navigator fund.

I have been an advocate for survivors of violence and abuse since 1994, about 12 of those years doing emergency response and hospital advocacy for survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

My background as a direct service provider is what led me to my current role as a policy advocate at Partnership for Safety & Justice. I know how vital it is for survivors to get the help they need when they experience trauma, and I also know that the crime victim services funds are not nearly enough to help survivors and their families heal and rebuild their lives. Current funding in Oregon is a fraction of what is needed, and as is true for nearly all economic gaps, that enormous shortfall is felt most profoundly by communities and survivors of color.

Together with a number of public safety and racial justice organizations in Oregon, PSJ was involved in a recent study¹ that spent over a year listening to survivors of color as they shared their experiences of trauma and violence, and of the public safety and criminal justice systems. Many expressed that their needs are not recognized by the systems and services that are available. Three out of four survivors of color will not report the harm they've experienced due to a lack of trust in systems that fall short of protecting them.

Such dynamics and circumstances deepen disparities in our communities of color, and they make those survivors' voices even harder to hear. Oregon can do better by allocating this funding to ODSVS, and we also believe that those funds should be distributed equitably so that

¹ When We Tell Our Stories: How Survivors of Color are Most Harmed and Least Helped by the Public Safety System. safetyandjustice.org/whenwetellourstories

community-based, culturally specific services have the resources that are needed to serve our communities of color.

While survivor services are urgently needed in general, housing is one of the vital needs in survivor communities. Crime victims can become homeless for a range of reasons. Many flee family situations that are too dangerous to withstand. Some experience violence in their community and need to leave their old neighborhood behind. Among those who experience domestic violence, the rate is particularly alarming; according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, domestic violence is the third leading cause of homelessness among families nationwide. Without access to safe and affordable shelter, victims are vulnerable to circumstances that can prevent their healing and deepen their trauma.

Like each of you, we at PSJ believe that we can have a more effective and responsive criminal justice system that ensures accountability, equity, and healing for all those impacted by harm and violence. **We strongly urge your support for SB 5014 so that Oregon can continue this work to equitably build a public safety system that builds strong families, safe communities, and a just society.**