

Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, Rayfield, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Cook and I am a domestic and sexual violence advocate in Multnomah County. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of expansion for the ODSVS fund.

I work at multiple domestic and sexual violence organizations in Multnomah County, so my daily interactions with survivors can range from crisis interventions, like restraining orders, to long-term stabilization support in shelter. In all of these diverse interactions, there is a common need: somewhere safe to stay.

I am here to ask for your support for a \$10 million increase in funding for the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services fund (ODSVS) within the Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division of the Department of Justice.

The ODSVS fund is the only General Fund source of dollars for confidential shelter, support, and safety planning services for survivors and their children. ODSVS is the fund that provides stability to keep the doors open at the confidential emergency shelters, run and staff the 24-hour hotlines, and maintain advocacy services. These dollars go to culturally-specific programs, Oregon Tribes, and community-based domestic and sexual violence programs, and serve survivors in every corner of our state.

Multnomah County only has three confidential domestic violence shelters with limited capacity. Every day, I complete safety and stabilization assessments for survivors looking for shelter or housing resources, but more often than not, there are not shelter spaces available for survivors and their children. Expanding the ODSVS fund allows domestic and sexual violence organizations to provide more options to survivors seeking safety.

Of special importance are the **Survivor Housing funds** to provide emergency assistance to survivors at imminent risk of homelessness or unstably or unsafely housed. I cannot count the number of times a survivor has told me that they just want somewhere safe to sleep and shower without fear. Housing is more than just a roof over our heads and shelter from the elements- it's a safe place to bathe, to cook meals, to rest, to eat with the family, to help children with homework, to play, to fill out job applications, to receive mail, and to heal. Survivor Housing funds allow survivors to not only stay safe and work towards immediate stability, but to take the next steps towards finding or creating a place that they can truly call home.

Please support ODSVS and Survivor Housing funds to your greatest capacity to ensure that survivors in your communities have access to emergency shelter, expert safety-planning, housing stability, and wrap-around support services. These services help victims identify and explore real options to escape violence. These services save lives.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the State of Oregon.

With gratitude for your commitment to survivors' safety,

Sarah Cook