



May 7, 2021

Joint Committee On Ways and Means, Subcommittee On Education  
c/o Co-Chairs Senator Lew Frederick and Representative Susan McLain  
*Submitted electronically*

RE: Testimony on Budget Considerations - HECC

Dear Committee Members:

The University of Oregon, Domestic Violence Clinic (Clinic) depends on HECC funding in order to provide students and low-income community survivors of domestic and sexual violence and stalking free legal services. In addition to providing survivors free legal services, the Clinic also supports two clinical courses, which provide certified law students the opportunity to get hands-on experience in representing survivors in both family law and protective order matters.

The Clinic plays a unique and important role in increasing access to justice for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The following client survey feedback, received in the last year, helps illustrate from our clients' perspective the important legal services the Clinic is providing (this feedback is being shared with our clients' permission):

“Having an attorney to help me out in the process was incredibly helpful, especially considering I am disabled and would not have been able to represent myself adequately. It was great to have the support from folks who really understood DV and its impacts and manifestations as well.”

“Thank you so much for helping me get out of a horrible situation and start my life over SAFE! I appreciate what all you have done for me and my daughter!”

“I was trying to navigate thru the legalities of the legal system and really didn't have a clue what to do. Then someone told me about the U of O DV Law Clinic. I immediately called the clinic. Right away I felt like they genuinely cared about me. It was so relieved to have their knowledge and expertise working for me. I highly recommend them.”

The law students who participate in the Clinic gain an important understanding of not just the law and procedure, but how to work with survivors of abuse in a trauma-informed way. They often report that their experience in the Clinic is one of the most valuable experiences of their law school careers. We've included with this letter a statement from a former student describing her experience.



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It is an incredible privilege to serve survivors and teach law students to do the same, but because the Clinic is predominantly grant funded there is always trepidation in not knowing if our funding will continue. The continuity of the HECC funding makes the Clinic's work viable, which is why we respectfully ask that continued funding be provided to the Domestic Violence Clinical Legal Education Fund.

Sincerely,

Kathryn M. Moakley and Kasia Mlynski

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University of Oregon School of Law  
Domestic Violence Clinic



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My name is Taylor Kinch, and I am a third-year law student at the University of Oregon School of Law. During my second year of law school, I participated in both the Domestic Violence Protective Order Clinic and the Advanced Domestic Violence Civil Clinic. Through the clinic I was able to gain invaluable experience working with vulnerable clients during some of the most difficult times in their lives. It was incredibly meaningful to provide such an essential service to women and families in Oregon who, without the clinic might otherwise not have been able to access legal services.

While working in the clinic, I represented a young mother at her contested restraining order hearing; the client received quality legal services at no cost, and she ultimately got her order continued. In turn, I was able to plead my first hearing and successfully advocate for my client.

The skills I learned in the Domestic Violence clinic are immensely valuable as I build my own legal career. Currently, I am working with Oregon Law Center to continue to advocate for low-income survivors of domestic violence, something I likely would not be doing if not for the clinic inspiring my commitment to serving survivors.