

Dear Senator Thatcher and our elected officials,

My name is Liz Starke and I am the development Director at Rose Haven, the ONLY day shelter and community center serving women and children in Portland experiencing the trauma of poverty and abuse. Over the last decade, I have advocated for thousands of women who have had to face the intersecting crises of poverty, and unfortunately abuse is at the top of the list. I would like to enthusiastically personally support this bill, SB 816.

As someone who is tasked with helping women who are in crisis fill out paperwork, I can tell you that anything we can do to take the burden away from them and let them feel safe is necessary. To come forward and report abuse is always a difficult process, and it can tear families and communities apart. The burden of reporting is huge, which is why too many people chose not to report. For those that do have the strength to report, they have to face countless questions and prove their case...all while trying to heal. The peace of mind bill would help ensure that folks are protected, throughout this process. This could mean the difference of life or death for many.

I would also like to point out that social service agencies like ours are pushed to their limits, as more people are in need every day. Social workers that help carry the burden of filling out forms and understanding bureaucracy need our help too. This bill would not only help the survivors, it would help streamline the work of social workers and advocates who are supporting survivors.

To get a protection order takes courage and strength. We need to protect the survivors that are able to achieve that hurdle. We need to make it easier for survivors to have peace of mind.

Sincerely,

Liz Starke