

February 27, 2023

Re: Letter in support of SB 5511

Dear Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 5511 and the investment in Individual Development Accounts. My name is Jayne Downing, and I am the Executive Director of the Center for Hope & Safety.

Center for HOPE & SAFETY



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

The Center for Hope & Safety serves victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion and Polk Counties. Last year, we had nearly 36,000 contacts to our program. Many of the survivors we work with struggle to start new lives free of violence.

Victims usually come to us with the clothes on their backs, and not much more. While in our confidential shelter, we provide everything for them – food, clothing, hygiene items, and much more. Survivors are literally often starting their lives over from scratch. Think of starting over again at 20, 30, 40, 50 or even older? At CHS, we help survivors start the hard work of stabilizing and rebuilding their lives.

Most of the survivors we work with do ultimately gain employment, even if they have not been allowed to work before by their abusive partners. Unfortunately, it is usually on the low end of the pay scale due to the lack of past job experience. The ability to increase their economic stability and see how they can improve their situations through Individual Development Accounts, could change the life trajectory for survivors and their children.

CHS has long dreamed of being able to offer survivors the opportunity to participate in an IDA program. We know what a tremendous difference this could make for their futures – the ability to save for deposits, first and last months rent, a car, college, or even their own home! Passage of SB 5511 will lead to these types of opportunities for many Oregonians.

Please support SB 5511 for all the individuals working to rebuild their lives. When I think of how the lives of families we serve could be changed through access to IDAs, I hope this program can be continue to thrive and grow to benefit vulnerable families.

Thank you for your consideration and all you do for Oregonians.

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because everyone deserves a life free of violence