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March 2, 2023

Re: Support for Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division Budget (SB 5514):

- *\$10 Million to the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (HB 2933) for confidential safety and support services*
- *\$6 Million to the Survivor Housing Fund (HB 3018) for housing assistance for survivors*

Co-Chairs Sollman and Evans, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety,

On behalf of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), we are pleased to submit testimony in support of funding in the Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division Budget (SB 5514) of \$10 million to the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (ODSVS) Fund for confidential safety planning and support services for survivors and \$6 million to the Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) for housing assistance for survivors.

The mission of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS) is to break the isolation of domestic and sexual violence. Incorporated in 1985 as Clackamas County's first domestic violence shelter, CWS is a community-based organization providing comprehensive, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services to survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, elder and vulnerable adult abuse, human trafficking, exploitation, and stalking.

ODSVS and Survivor Housing Funds are each essential funding sources that allow Oregon's network of nonprofit, community-based, Tribal, and culturally-specific domestic and sexual violence service providers across the state to ensure that survivors have access to confidential, culturally-specific and trauma-informed support and assistance as they seek safety from abuse.

\$10 Million to Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) in the CVSSD Budget (This funding is also requested in a bipartisan stand-alone bill, HB 2933)

The Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) distributes funds to more than 60 community-based, culturally specific, and Tribal programs across the state of Oregon to provide confidential trauma-informed services for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking.

CWS utilizes these funds to support children and adult survivors with wide-ranging crisis intervention and long-term supportive services such as emergency shelter, 24/7 crisis line, legal advocacy, emergency and long-term safety planning, counseling, support groups, and children's programs. We also provide prevention education in 21 schools as well as training and education throughout the community.

Community-based domestic and sexual violence programs intersect with many state systems, including the public health and public safety systems. In our community have built collaborations with law enforcement, healthcare providers, schools, the criminal justice system, social services agencies, and many other community partners, and offer critical support for survivors navigating these systems. CWS utilizes a portion of our ODSVS funds to support confidential advocates for survivors, deliver children and youth services such as art-based therapy, provide Latina/x Services and Promotoras programming, and offer legal services at A Safe Place Family Justice Center, which brings together all of these system-based partners with community-based and culturally specific services.

ODSVS is the only state general fund source of support for these critical services. The need for these supportive services continues to grow and the burden of essential service provision is challenged by staffing shortages, lack of funding, and other obstacles. We are in support of investing \$10 million in the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund to help programs across the state continue to provide necessary and lifesaving services.

\$6 Million in Oregon Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) in the CVSSD Budget (This funding is also requested in a bipartisan stand-alone bill, HB 3018)

The Oregon Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) distributes funds to more than 60 community-based, culturally specific, and Tribal programs across the state of Oregon to facilitate access to safe and stable housing for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking. Survivor Housing Funds are a crucial component of the efforts to assist survivors in their journey toward stable permanent housing. Survivors often face episodes of homelessness due to the violence, safety issues, and/or isolation caused by the abuser. They often have few or no resources available when fleeing.

Survivor Housing Funds awarded to CWS go to survivors with little or no income to address barriers in accessing housing. This may include moving assistance, application fees, security deposits, and other non-rent move-in costs. These critical and flexible funds help survivors begin this new stage in their lives on solid footing. **100% of survivors assisted in the last six months have maintained their safe housing at both 3 and 6 months of being housed and report feeling better off and more hopeful about the future.** Below is an example of how these crucial funds positively impact survivors.

Through our Abuse Later in Life program, CWS supported an older adult survivor with a Section 8 housing voucher to apply for an apartment. After applying, the survivor discovered that her application was denied due to utility debt incurred while she was still with her abusive partner. Survivor Housing Funds allowed us to make a deposit for utilities and get her approved for the unit. Section 8 housing vouchers are a scarce resource that requires securing housing in a short time frame. These vouchers are invaluable because they provide a long-term affordable housing option. Because of the Survivor Housing Fund, she was able to use her Section 8 voucher and secure long-term safe, and stable housing.

In closing, \$16 million in long-term stable funding for ODSVS (\$10 million) and SHF (\$6 million) funding, administered by DOJ's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD), will provide programs with the resources to further develop capacity and build a statewide infrastructure designed for sustainability and equity in meeting the needs of survivors. This funding is necessary to stabilize programs, meet the rising need for safety services, and offer wages designed to recruit and retain skilled workers and administrators.

For the above reasons, we hope you will support an ongoing investment of a \$10 million increase in ODSVS funds and a continuation of \$6 million in Survivor Housing Funds in the CVSSD Budget. Full

funding of these services is essential to support crime victims and survivors in Oregon and the organizations and providers who serve them. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Melissa Erlbaum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melissa" and last name "Erlbaum" clearly distinguishable.

Melissa Erlbaum
Executive Director