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February 23, 2023

*Re: \$16 Million in the Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division Budget (SB 5514) for:*

- *\$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 The New Day Program and New Avenues for Youth, 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. Both of these amounts were allocated as one-time funding during the pandemic, and we seek continuation of these programs as on-going and stable services designed to meet critical need.

The New Day Program, part of New Avenues for Youth, is a program that serves youth ages 12-25 at risk for sex trafficking or those who are currently experiencing or are survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. We are a collaborative between New Avenues, Raphael House, UNICA, SEI, Call to Safety, and VOA Home Free. New Day has had contact with over 650 unique youth since 2018, supporting survivors through mentorship, advocacy, case management, housing, and outreach as well as the robust services leverage through our partnership including economic empowerment support, ST prevention and education in schools, and confidential culturally specific advocacy.

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

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of Oregon to provide confidential trauma-informed services for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and human trafficking. These community-based nonprofits 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. These programs also provide prevention education in 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. These programs 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 structures.

New Day and New Avenues recognize and support DVSA Community Based providers as an integral part of providing wrap around support for many young people across the houseless youth continuum, but especially youth survivors of Sex Trafficking. At New Day alone, 75% of youth who were screened this fiscal year identified a housing need, but conversations often looked like safety planning to stay in unsafe, non-confidential shelters where the possibility of being found by their trafficker was a clear a present danger. Survivors are some of the strongest people you can know, but it is deeply challenging to hold hope when navigating a system where the needs so vastly outweighs the resources. To illustrate this, I would like to share a youth story (identifying information has been changed to protect confidentiality.)

### Tanya's Story

*Tanya is a 24 year old Black woman. We first received a call from Tanya during a weekend where her trafficker had left her at the hotel alone. She shared that she had recently been sexually assaulted by a buyer and fled the hotel room only for her trafficker to become enraged about her not collecting the money and brutally physically assaulting her. That same week she became aware that she was 3 months pregnant and made the decision to leave. Tanya identified that she wanted support, and over the next two we connected Tanya with a confidential New Day Advocate who safety planned with her every time her trafficker left there alone. Tanya stored her documents and began to pack a bag, she even made up a story about a new client to allow her to meet with her advocate and complete an SSA (safety and stability assessment required for applying to confidential shelter), but no shelters were available. Tanya voiced fear that if she accessed any non-confidential space her trafficker would find her, and was dedicated to updating her SSA and checking in with staff to see when beds were open. Tanya waited over a month, and finally her mentor let her know something was becoming available but Tanya didn't respond until later in the day. When she called she was in tears, letting her mentor know that her trafficker did not give her any time alone*



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*that day until hours after the SSA was live, and by the time she was able to use her phone alone, the space was no longer available.*

*Tanya was upset, but decided to utilize the non-confidential shelter option. She was able to access but experienced struggles not only in the environment but with staff who were not trained to support her in the complex feelings she was navigating after fleeing her abuser. The shelter wasn't open during the day, and she found herself having to hide during the day time, experiencing anxiety and constant fear. Then one day, Tanya shared that her trafficker found her while she was leaving the shelter and had begun stalking her around the property. She had attempted to get a restraining order before, but it could not be served due to police not being able to locate him. Shortly after she stopped accessing shelter and shared via text that she was staying with her trafficker again. She said she "did everything I was supposed to do and he still found me. What's the point, at least this way I don't have to be in fear of when he'll show up and how mad he will be."*

The intersection of houseless youth services sex trafficking services, and DVSA services often looks like working with individuals who are navigating the long term impacts of domestic and sexual violence (financial instability from financial abuse, stalking, mental health impacts, loss of housing or barriers to renting, medical bills, etc) and it is imperative that in those situations we can partner with DV and SA organizations to ensure expertise, confidential care and housing options.

The only that survivors like Tanya can get the services they deserve when they need them is to ensure that providers in the DVSA have the resources to keep survivors safe when they are ready. There is no amount of care, expertise, and dedication that can replace a lack of housing or deficit in funding for staff and programming which is why this funding is critical.

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 for 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)***



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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 towards 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.

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence 2021 Annual Domestic Violence Court Report, Oregon's domestic and sexual violence hotline staff received 475 contacts, averaging nearly 20 contacts per hour in the one-day count. During that time victims made 127 requests for services—including emergency shelter, housing, transportation, childcare, legal representation, and other support needs—that programs could not provide because they lacked the resources. Approximately 80% of these unmet requests were for housing and emergency shelter. Both in 2019 and 2021, the Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women survivor priority survey found that permanent, affordable housing is the greatest need facing survivors of domestic and sexual violence in our state.

Oregon Survivor Housing Funds (SHF) have been instrumental in supporting survivors and their families in finding safe and permanent housing in the midst of a statewide housing shortage, rise in rent costs, and current inflation. The SHF supports survivors by providing supportive services and the financial assistance resources necessary 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.

We support an investment of \$6 million in Oregon Survivor Housing Funds to end housing instability for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking and human trafficking.

**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. Continuation of this one-time 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

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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 'Kat Salas', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kat Salas, New Day Director

New Avenues for Youth

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