



March 2, 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

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

On behalf of Hope & Safety Alliance, 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.

Hope & Safety Alliance (formerly Womenspace) has been providing hope and safety for survivors of domestic violence in Lane County for over 45 years. Both the ODSVS and SHF funds have directly improved survivor's lives!

In support of the \$6 Million in Oregon Survivor Housing Fund (SHF) in the CVSSD Budget (also requested in HB 3018)

Recently we helped a survivor who was served with a 72-hour eviction notice for being 3 days late on rent. This mom of 3 kids had no friends or family to stay with and nowhere else to go. We immediately contacted the property and used Survivor Housing Funds to pay the overdue balance, keeping this family safely housed and off the streets. *"I appreciate you so much! Thank you for being there when I needed you the most, I don't know what we would've done without your help."*

Another survivor, after experiencing escalating violence, faced homelessness by fleeing with her child rather than endure the accelerating abuse. For several weeks, they lived in her car and when she reached out to us for help, it was

Survivor Housing Funds that made it possible to help her find and secure a new home. Survivor Housing Funds also paid for the deposit and first month's rent. After they moved in, the survivor called us to let us know that *she and her child finally felt safe and were able to sleep through the night for the first time in a long time*. With Survivor Housing Funds to secure the initial move-in costs, the survivor has been able to sustain her housing and rent, and they have been safe and stably housed for several months now.

Survivor Housing Funds allows Hope & Safety Alliance to provide immediate support to survivors and their children, most who had fled an abusive partner. We also help with housing searches, application processes, landlord negotiations, and tenant education. These funds have been critical for agencies like ours to help thousands of survivors, and those impacted by domestic and sexual violence stay safe, warm, and housed.

In support of \$10 Million to Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) in the CVSSD Budget (also requested in HB 2933)

With domestic violence the leading cause of houselessness in women and families, in a climate of extreme rise in rental rates, the need for housing, and assistance to stay housed has become the primary focus of the **600 calls we receive every month**. This housing crisis has increased demand for services and basic needs dramatically – having flexible OSDVS funding available to meet these needs is critical.

Answering and responding to the Hope & Safety Alliance crisis line 24 hours per day, 7 days per week is an imperative and often lifesaving service. However, staffing capacity suffers due to pandemic-related cost increases, wages not keeping pace with inflation, and the need to provide culturally specific services. OSDVS funds provide agencies with the flexibility and support they need to increase capacity, offer competitive wages and benefits, and **ensure that survivors have access to confidential, culturally-specific and trauma-informed support** and assistance as they seek safety from abuse.

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.

Hope & Safety Alliance supports 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 provide prevention education in schools as well as training and education throughout the community. Our 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.

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 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 black ink, appearing to read "Julie Weismann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Julie Weismann
Executive Director