



## The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon

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Co-Chair Steiner and Co-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Co-Chair Sollman and Co-Chair Evans and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety

Re: Yes on HB 3018 for funding to assist survivors of domestic and sexual with housing needs.

My name is Danielle Murrell. I am a member of The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Program Manager for the Warrior of Hope Program. Thank you for taking up HB 3018. We strongly support this bill, which is essential for the stability and wellbeing of the victims and survivors we serve.

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde operates The Warriors of Hope program, which is a tribal program that serves victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, elder abuse and trafficking. The tribe is located in northwest Oregon. The Tribe has a large service area, which includes both rural counties (Polk, Tillamook, and Yamhill counties) and more urban counties (Multnomah, Marion, and Washington) and the cities of Portland and Salem. The Warriors of Hope program provides 24-hour crisis line, assistance with locating safe shelter, safety planning, legal advocacy, support groups and community education and outreach serving families since 2015.

This housing funding is of momentous importance to our community and the victim/survivors that we serve. American Indian/Alaska Native women experience sexual and domestic violence at a disproportionate rate compared to non-natives. 84.3% of American Indian/Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime. When they have to leave their home in order to flee from violence, it often leaves them and their children homeless and securing housing is essential to the stabilization process of victims/survivors. This puts them at risk for more violence and abuse. Victims/survivors are getting back on their feet after enduring trauma and abuse, trying to protect their children, seeking and maintaining safety are all contingent upon securing stable housing. The request for housing services is the highest demand and need for our victims that come thru our program and the most difficult access. Housing is the foundation for which they can grow from and be successful in their journey to healing.

Passage of HB 3018 is critical to addressing this housing crisis for our tribal victim/survivors and their families. It would allow domestic and sexual violence programs across the state to continue responding to both the imminent danger of violence and the often-imminent threat of becoming houseless. These funds allow agencies like ours to provide individualized assistance and emergency funds for those who need to move for safety when fleeing an abusive partner, or who need help with housing searches, application processes, landlord negotiations, and tenant education.

This housing funding will allow us to continue to serve our families that would otherwise be in the streets, sleeping at nearly freezing temperatures in cars with their infants/ toddlers or tent camping in our rural area. With housing funds, we have been able to assist victims fleeing placing them in motels, funding storage, uhaul, rental applications fees, security deposit and first month's rent. The outcomes of housing stability for our survivors opens up a new world of hope, safety and stability. One of our survivors that we assisted using housing funds was an aging out foster youth living on and off the streets. With this funding, we were able to put her in a motel and eventually assist her with getting her own apartment for the first time in her life. She is stabilized and has been able to manage her mental health and learn independent living skills. With housing funding, we were also able to assist a survivor and her child flee violence, their living situation was not stable and often sleeping on people's couches for safety. With the housing funding, we were able to assist with rental assistance. We have seen significant personal self-growth in the survivor, which allowed her to be a better parent to her child; not living in constant fear. Her child was able to be enrolled in school once they moved to their new place creating stability and structure. Another survivor we were able to assist with housing funds had fled from another state with two children. We were able to temporarily put her and her children in a motel and eventually help her get her own place. Due to having stable housing, her and her children were able to seek mental health services and her children's behaviors have significantly improved. She gained confidence, went back to school, and has now started her own business. These housing funds not only positively affects victim but also their children. It gives them an opportunity to thrive; living in constant fear affects your mental/physical health and ability for children to concentrate at school among many other negative impacts. These housing situations are based out of a person's basic right to live free from domestic and or sexual violence. This is a public issue and we have an ethical obligation to make this basic right accessible to all.

With the affects from the pandemic we have seen significant overall inflation, increased rent, housing costs and most to note; significant increase in mental health issues. Due to these impacts programs have had to utilize motel stays as safe shelters more than ever before. Without funding to maintain this type of sheltering, advocates are forced to turn survivors away from emergency shelter. Housing funds are crucial in ending both the cycle of violence and the potential cycle of being unhoused while also trying to stay safe from an abuser. Funding for both emergency shelter and steps to achieve permanent housing dramatically changes the ability of community-based and culturally specific DVSA programs to help survivors rebuild their lives free of violence.

As the growing housing crisis continues in our state, we are grateful to the lawmakers who are prioritizing the health and safety of victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence with this legislation. We urge you to pass HB 3018.

Sincerely,



Danielle Murrell

Warriors of Hope, Program Manager