

Submitter: Doran Penner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education

Measure: HB3456

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Committee On Higher Education,

My name is Doran Penner and I am a first-year college student in Portland. I am testifying in support of HB3456, something higher education drastically needs right now.

Starting college just last fall, I was astonished by the sheer amount of sexual violence I heard about. I thought that it was far, far less common than it actually is, and was even more stunned by the simple acceptance by so many people that this is just how things are. When I told a friend about this, they responded along the lines of, "Yeah, it's terrible, but that kind of just happens in college, there's nothing you can do about it." Sexual assault should never be the norm, ever. Supporting HB3456 is one of the best things I can do to try to make sexual assault less commonplace and help survivors get a grasp on their lives after such a traumatic experience.

One of the most important things in addressing sexual assault is providing a support network for survivors. HB3456 requires that all institutions of higher education provide free, confidential sexual misconduct counseling services for all students and employees. This kind of help is desperately needed by people who often have no idea where to go or what to do after experiencing sexual violence. Additionally, being the victim of sexual assault can lead to a loss of academic grants, as survivors need to take time away from their studies for their own sake. Nobody should ever have to put their academic well-being over their personal well-being given such a traumatic event. HB3456 ensures that grades can be waived for success-based programs that would otherwise be lost to the student, allowing survivors to keep their scholarships and ensuring that they have fewer things to be concerned about.

I strongly urge the committee to vote HB3456 favorably out of committee and provide the resources necessary for survivors to continue their lives as best as they can.

Thank you for your time.