

Submitter: Brigid Fallon
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

Our state will be healthier, stronger, and more resilient when everyone has what they need to thrive. That's why I support Fair Shot for All's People's Budget—a clear set of policies and investments that will lift up our communities and strengthen the state by using a racial, gender, and economic justice framework.

In particular, as Housing Director of the Domestic Violence Resource Center, I urge you to support full funding for HB 3018 (Survivor Housing Funds) and HB 2933 (Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund) in the Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division, to ensure continued access to vital life-saving community-based, culturally-specific, and Tribal Nation shelter and housing services for survivors of domestic or sexual violence and their children.

Funding for HB 2933 ensures that basic emergency shelter and safety planning advocacy services for survivors are not cut. These services save lives in crisis. Funding for HB 3018 ensures that housing advocacy and placement assistance for survivors is not cut. These services help survivors and their children move into or stay stable in safe housing as they transition out of emergency,

These issues are important to me because...

as Washington County grows, we are receiving increasing requests for shelter and support from domestic abuse survivors. We're the county's only DV shelter provider and must regularly turn people away who desperately need help. For many callers, it's a life-or-death crisis, yet we're able to provide only seven crisis shelter slots at a time. In other words, as we face a growing number of survivors desperate to escape domestic violence in our county, there are no more than seven who can be safely housed at any given time.

Our 24-hour Crisis Line is a vital link and source of support to survivors. We struggle to keep it open, given staff shortages and rapidly rising labor costs. We also have a transitional housing shelter and an apartment program for survivors no longer in crisis. They are vital to helping survivors rebuild their lives and prevent homelessness for themselves and their children.

These services matter a great deal to survivors, and we would like to see expansion, rather than reduction of funds to support our work, given that we find ourselves faced with vast need.

In closing, we are asking you to support the Governor's strategic decision to use all available current resources to invest in these key priorities. Oregon's reserves are already healthy and strong. Rather than saving more for a future Rainy Day, we need to make investments now. We create widespread economic opportunity for all when we invest in access to safety and services for our communities.

I urge you to support full funding for HB 2933 and HB 3018 and the other policies and investments in the People's Budget and the Fair Shot Agenda.

Sincerely,

Brigid Fallon
Beaverton