



Everyone deserves a life free
of domestic and sexual violence.

April 7, 2023

Re: Support for \$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

Dear Joint Ways and Means Committee and Subcommittee on Public Safety:

Call To Safety operates Oregon's largest domestic and sexual violence crisis line, and has a long history of providing individualized services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Founded 50 years ago, we provide a comprehensive 24/7 crisis line, follow-up advocacy for survivors, support groups, community outreach and education, and sexual assault medical advocacy. Our crisis line handles over 25,000 calls annually. All our services are free, voluntary, and confidential.

Call To Safety strongly supports continued funding in the Department of Justice Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) 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 height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we urge the continuation of these programs as on-going and stable services designed to meet life-saving needs.

ODSVS and SHF Funds are each essential and critical funding sources that allow survivors in Oregon to have access to confidential, culturally-specific, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed support from highly trained, certified, and dedicated advocates as they seek to move towards a life free of domestic and/or sexual violence.

ODSVS supports more than 60 providers across Oregon in providing confidential, trauma-informed, and family-centered services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and sex trafficking. These community-based nonprofits support all survivors within a household with wide-ranging crisis intervention and long-term supportive services such as access to emergency motel vouchers, operations of 24/7 crisis lines, legal advocacy, essential and complex safety-planning, rental assistance, relocation costs, support groups and so much more. These programs, as is the case with Home Free, also provide prevention education in schools as well as training and education throughout the community.

The leading cause of homelessness for women is domestic violence. SHF are a crucial component to the efforts to assist survivors in their journey towards increased safety and stability, and there is not enough housing support to meet the immense need in our community. Especially here in Portland, where inflation costs went up over 8% last year, and rents raised by as much as 14.5%.



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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. 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.

Issues of domestic and sexual violence impact and ripple out harm across our community as a public health issue. Call To Safety, like so many non-profit providers, struggle with financial uncertainty on a regular basis to ensure we can sustain our existing services, when so many of our funds are out of our control. We rely on ODSVS to keep our doors open, and keep supporting survivors.

An increase in ODSVS funds can further Call To Safety's impact with survivors and our community as a whole. Survivors who reach out to Call To Safety may access emergency housing through motel vouchers, national and local transportation assistance to get from a dangerous location to a safe one. We provide callers with needs assessment, support, safety planning, crisis intervention, and information and referrals to community resources. We also provide specialized, survivor-led case management, access to housing supports, support groups for survivors of sexual assault or for adult survivors of sexual abuse; and support to survivors of sexual assault who are incarcerated. In addition, our confidential advocates support patients during sexual assault exams at all hospitals in Multnomah County, providing information on exam options, emotional support, support with systems and connection to resources and follow up services.

Please support an ongoing investment of a \$10 million increase in ODSVS funds and a continuation of \$6 million in SHF 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.

Respectfully,

Mara Gross
Interim Executive Director
Call To Safety