



Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women

Support HB 2676
Improving Crime Victim's Compensation
April 19, 2023
Senate Judiciary Committee

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

The Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women (the Alliance) is pleased to submit testimony in support of HB 2676A with the pending amendments.

Founded in 1999, the Alliance is a coalition made up of survivors of gender-based violence, advocates serving survivors, and allies. The Alliance is dedicated to promoting legislation in Oregon that will protect and empower survivors of domestic and sexual violence. The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, and the Oregon Law Center are statewide steering committee members of the Alliance, along with several non-profit confidential community-based survivor service organizations.

Alliance members are united in their commitment to ensuring access to confidential, culturally-specific, community-based, and trauma-informed services for survivors of domestic or sexual violence across the state. The Alliance understands that sexual violence, domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, human trafficking, and other forms of violence and abuse are often connected. These forms of violence are perpetrated through the use of power and control to manipulate, terrorize, and harm victims. As an Alliance, we are committed to our roles in the coordinated community response dedicated to the prevention of violence and supports for survivors. Our goal is to work with community partners to ensure that survivors seeking safety and support encounter no wrong door.

The Alliance appreciates the opportunity to have worked closely with the Department of Justice on the development of HB 2676A, which makes needed changes to the crime victim compensation program, expanding eligibility for coverage of damages and injuries sustained by survivors of crime. In particular, we appreciate that the bill will ensure that Oregon's crime victim compensation program is designed with a trauma-informed approach, increasing access to support and services for crime survivors in need.

In the aftermath of a crime, the victims' compensation program provides critical financial support to survivors. Without this support, many survivors would go without the services they need or be forced to suffer significant financial hardship. HB 2676A will update the program with a victim-centered and trauma-informed lens. The bill will remove out-dated statutory requirements that pose barriers to access, and expand coverage, and ensure better support for survivors as they navigate the justice system and cope with trauma.

Specifically, and perhaps most importantly, HB 2676A provides new options for survivors who are uncomfortable reporting to law enforcement to access services. Many survivors experience fear or other barriers to reporting to law enforcement, but are still in need of and deserve support. The bill eliminates the requirement that victims and survivors cooperate with law



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enforcement investigations and prosecutions in order to receive assistance, and provides alternative, trauma-informed, and culturally relevant methods of accessing services (for example, obtaining a federal, state, local or Tribal protection order qualifies as evidence). The bill also expands eligibility and coverage for counseling, provides greater coverage for services needed through post-conviction processes, and clarifies that strangulation forensic evidence kit expenses are reimbursable.

These changes and more are important updates to the program that will ensure greater protection for crime survivors. We again thank the Department of Justice for their collaborative process and we respectfully urge your support of HB 2676A with the pending amendments.

Thank you for your work and service to Oregonians.