



April 27, 2023

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education:

I am the Interim Director of the Domestic Violence Clinic at the University of Oregon School of Law, and I am here to ask you to continue to provide support to our state program—the Clinical Legal Education Program. For over 20 years, we have trained law students to provide holistic, trauma-informed legal services to low-income survivors of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and stalking. This service is crucial for both the law students and clients we serve.

Our mission in the Clinic is to educate law students in providing holistic, trauma-informed legal services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. The students work under highly trained attorney and provide direct services to clients in matters such as restraining orders, divorce and custody cases, and other civil legal matters that affect our clients' ability to achieve safety.

As I believe the committee members know, domestic violence is a serious issue in Oregon. In 2018, there were over 128,000 calls statewide to programs who assist survivors of domestic and sexual violence. In 2021, there were over 18,000 reports of domestic violence offenses to law enforcement across the state. In Lane County, where the Clinic is located, there were over 8,000 calls to the hotline at Hope & Safety Alliance, which provides advocacy and other services for survivors. From 2019-2021, the Lane County District Attorney Victim's Services office assisted an average of 900 applicants a year in obtaining family abuse prevention act orders.

As these survivors seek safety, one of the most important needs they have is for accurate and informed legal services. The Clinic helps survivors understand their rights and options so they can make informed decisions and leave their abusive situations safely. The court process can often be overwhelming and confusing, especially for litigants who have experienced the trauma of abuse and must face their abuser in court. Financial abuse and limitations often leaves survivors of abuse unable to access legal help.

Our clinic serves over 150 clients per year, with a focus on family law issues including restraining orders, emergency custody matters, divorce and permanent custody and parenting time issues. We also assist clients with other legal needs, such as in housing and employment matters. Clients receive consultations where they are provided with extensive advice on their rights, responsibilities, and courses of action. They may also receive additional services where we assist them with preparing for court or communicating with an opposing party to resolve matters; this may include full representation in pending court matters.

The Clinic can make the difference for a survivor in successfully litigating a case. A recent client provided the following feedback: “[The Clinic] was more helpful than I could ever begin to put into words. Not only did they help me get everything I was asking for in court twice and keep my child and I safe, but I was able to use the knowledge and skills they gave me to go ahead and represent myself the next time...I could not be more grateful”



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I ask that you continue to support the funds for the Clinic, which will help us continue our work to teach students and help survivors, and I thank you again for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Moakley
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