



CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



Bureau of Police

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February 5th, 2024

Oregon House Committee on Judiciary
Representative Jason Kropf, Chair

RE: HB 4123

Madam Chairman:

My name is Susan Lehman, I am the Sexual Assault Kit Program Coordinator for the Portland Police Bureau. The City of Portland provides over 50% of the sexual assault kits processed at the Oregon State Crime Lab.

Tracking of the sexual assault kits begins with the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE's) they are the ones who put the kit in the statewide tracking system, this ensures that all kits are accounted for.

Professional certified SANEs are invaluable when it comes to documenting the injuries and collecting evidence of a sexual assault. They are sometimes the first person to hear the victim's story. These highly skilled highly trained nurses listen with compassion as the victim goes over the most horrific event of their lives. Without judgment without bias, they carefully walk the victim through the sexual assault exam, collecting as much evidence as they can. Then months or sometimes years later they are expertly testifying in court explaining to a jury the exam and how trauma can affect the victim's memory and demeanor.

The rural and frontier communities are severely lacking in SANE's. The standards to become a SANE in Oregon are high and they should be, but this creates an undue burden for our nurses in rural and frontier communities. They do not have access to the same number of patients that the urban areas have, thereby making it difficult for them to complete all their requirements. The SANE commission should have the ability to fund travel, training and lodging for these nurses. Every victim in the state of Oregon, deserves the specialized care of a SANE.

Lastly, currently this program is only able to support a part time SANE Coordinator, however I have never once called or sent an email that wasn't immediately answered, which demonstrates the commitment by the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force and their team to these critical support services.

Funding the SANE commission ensures, that the State of Oregon has highly trained nurses, full time staff to support the nurses, training, and technical assistance.

Sincerely,
Susan Lehman
Program Coordinator
Portland Police Bureau

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