

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Every survivor of sexual assault deserves accessible, trauma-informed, skilled medical care in the wake of experiencing this particularly unique form of victimization. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) are specifically trained to provide this essential healthcare for anyone who may need it, and in doing so, hold a pivotal role in improving safety, justice, and healing for survivors across Oregon. **That's why I support the creation of an ongoing, dedicated state funding source for the SANE Certification Commission (SCC).**

Almost a decade ago, I learned about the highly specialized and crucial work SANEs do and the impact they have for survivors. Their role and effort is one of the many reasons that led me to want to learn more about preventing sexual violence and I am now the Abuse Prevention Coordinator at the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force. Comprehensive prevention is only possible when those who work with and serve survivors are properly resourced. For this reason and more, **I urge you to support HB 4123** to ensure access to certified SANEs for survivors of sexual assault and professional support for Oregon's SANE workforce. Funding for HB 4123 provides stable foundational funding for the management of the SCC, whose duties include overseeing competency and standards of care for the provision of sexual assault forensic exams, reviewing and certifying new and renewal certification applications, and ensuring that SANE response is coordinated with other key partners in the response to sexual assault, including advocates, law enforcement, and prosecutors. Medical forensic exams conducted by SANEs not only meet essential medical needs for survivors, but are also critical in the evidence collection process for use in investigations and prosecutions of sexual assaults when a survivor chooses to report to law enforcement.

These issues are important to me because of the many people past and present who are survivors or victims of sexual violence. Some are my family and friends, and I have seen firsthand the ripple effects in communities and the barriers that exist to survivors as a result of the underinvestment in SANEs in Oregon. If we are to create a future free of sexual violence and other forms of oppression, bolstering the supports for SANEs who so expertly serve people in some of their most trying times, is necessary.

In closing, we are asking you to support survivors of sexual assault and the SANE workforce that cares for them by passing HB 4123. The current number of certified SANEs in Oregon is critically low, and investment in the SCC will support outreach and training to recruit and certify new SANEs, while also supporting the existing workforce as they respond to the ongoing crisis of sexual assault in Oregon. **An investment in the SCC is an investment in healing and survivor-centered response services across our state.**

Sincerely,

Eli Cox
Eugene