



256 Warner Milne Road, Oregon City, OR 97045
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February 6, 2024

Re: Modernizing Oregon's Anti-Stalking Law (HB 4156)

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS), we are pleased to submit testimony in support of Modernizing Oregon's Anti-Stalking Law (HB 4156) updating definitions pertaining to stalking orders and stalking offenses by contemplating the increasing use of technology, and increasing penalties for the crimes of stalking and violating a court's stalking protective order in certain circumstances.

The mission of Clackamas Women's Services (CWS) is to break the isolation of domestic and sexual violence. Incorporated in 1985 as Clackamas County's first domestic violence shelter, CWS is a community-based organization providing comprehensive, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services to survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, elder and vulnerable adult abuse, human trafficking, exploitation, and stalking. CWS supports survivors of stalking most notably through individual advocacy at A Safe Place Family Justice Center, The Village Emergency Shelter, Housing Program, and Civil Legal Services. Additionally, we have hosted Community Education & Prevention Series on Dynamics of Stalking, offering learning opportunities for social service providers, caseworkers, advocates, counselors/therapists, law enforcement, legal professionals, and members of the greater community.

Stalking affects every population and co-occurs with many other victimizations. Over half of stalkers are current or former intimate partners. Stalking is often a predictor of future lethal actions. Intimate partners are considered the most threatening and dangerous type of stalking offenders; significantly increasing the risk of intimate partner homicide. Increasing the felony upgrade from a Class C felony to a Class B felony will not only hold offenders more accountable, but further address the immense impact this crime has on survivors.

HB 4156 also improves the "felony upgrade" statute to include cases in which the perpetrator has a prior conviction for stalking; when the perpetrator is subject to another protection order; or when the stalking includes behavior that is a felony, revenge porn, or stalking by GPS. This Bill also updates current law to ensure that cyberstalking, electronic and internet harassment, "revenge porn" and other forms of stalking through the mis-use of modern day technology are included as prohibited behaviors. This is critical as 80% of stalking victims are stalked through technology; and technology-facilitated stalking can be just as invasive, threatening, and fear-inducing as in-person stalking.

In closing, technology is being used to stalk victims in new and harmful ways. Stalking behavior is an indication of lethality, and inflicts significant physical, economic, and psychological harm on victims. For the above reasons, we hope you will support Modernizing Oregon's Anti-Stalking Law (HB 4156)

to increase safety for survivors and accountability for offenders. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Melissa Erlbaum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melissa" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Erlbaum".

Melissa Erlbaum
Executive Director