

February 5, 2025

*Re: Support for Victims of Crime Act grants (HB 3196)*

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

On behalf of HAVEN from Domestic and Sexual Violence, we are submitting testimony in support of HB 3196, which appropriates money to the Department of Justice to backfill reductions in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants.

HAVEN from Domestic and Sexual Violence To provide safe and supportive services to those affected by interpersonal and sexual violence by empowering survivors and our community through advocacy, education, and prevention. HAVEN supports survivors of violence by providing survivor led/centered advocacy services and supports. We support emergency services, such as hotel, food, transportation, protection orders, as well as emotional support and safety planning. We work directly with survivors and provide services and meaningful access with services tailored to meet the unique needs of survivors. We provide services to 4 counties (Wasco, Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam) as well as parts of the Warm Springs Reservation.

## **Background**

In 1984, Congress signed VOCA into law and created the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). VOCA funding (appropriated from the CVF) is the primary source of federal grants for victim services, including services for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, human trafficking, elder abuse, and other crimes. It supports victims in some of the most high-risk scenarios who are experiencing strangulation, stalking, and an increased risk of serious injury and homicide. **It also matches 75% of eligible state victim compensation funding.**

## **Impact**

Programs across the state rely on VOCA funding to provide services, including Children's Advocacy Centers, District Attorney Victim Assistance Programs (DAVAPs), Community-based Nonprofit Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) Programs, and Campus Sexual Assault Programs. These grants fund vital services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, ranging from crisis intervention to long-term healing.

VOCA funds are fundamental to the successful operation of our 24 hour/365 days per year Crisis Line by supporting the roles of Crisis Line Coordinator and a dedicated

Crisis Line Advocate. The Crisis Line allows survivors of violence to access supportive service, in real time, from a fully trained/certified advocate. It is a critical service for survivors of violence, as violence does not just occur during standard business hours. It occurs 24 hours a day, everyday of the week, even on holidays. Our Crisis Line provides meaningful access, support, and services when the survivor needs it most. Our Crisis Line also provides education and support to community partners, such as Law Enforcement, allowing them to provide the best service possible when working with survivors of violence. Our Crisis Line Advocates respond in person to the hospital when a survivor of Domestic or Sexual Violence is identified (as well as police stations, courthouses, etc. Regardless of the location in our service area, our goal is to meet the survivor where they are at, both emotionally and locationally). They not only provide emotional support during the survivor's hospital stay, they provide critical information and safety planning (such as emergency hotel) to survivors of violence, allowing them to exit the hospital to the safest location possible at no cost to them. ALL of HAVEN's services are provided free of charge to any person that screens into our service.

In recent months, over the holidays, HAVEN's Crisis Line was called to our local hospital at 2:33am by the emergency room department's charge nurse. The nurse identified a survivor of violence that presented with signs and symptoms of both Domestic and Sexual violence committed by the survivor's current partner. The survivor had recently relocated to our service area to begin their life with the person they had been in a long distance relationship for over 2 years. As a couple, they had recently purchased a home together. The survivor shared that within the first 6 months that they were living together, their partners' behaviors changed. The survivor was no longer allowed to wear make up outside the home, or go anywhere without their partner there. The perpetrator even went as far as to take the keys to the survivor's vehicle and odometer checked the mileage, just in case she had a spare key. Because of this the survivor was forced to quit their job. Additionally, because of their newness to the area, they shared that they had no family or friends in the area and now had nowhere to go. HAVEN stayed with survivor during their time in the hospital, including through the SANE exam and the law enforcement interview. Upon completion of all the needed testing and procedures, the survivor was discharged. Because she could not go home, she was placed in emergency hotel with an immediate safety plan. An appointment was made for the following afternoon with the Crisis Line Advocate that supported her and a full safety plan was developed with the survivor. HAVEN provided support with a over week of emergency hotel and food, as well as the filing of a protection order. Plans were made for a legal consultation with a local lawyer to support the survivor regarding the recently purchased home and a train was purchased, so that the survivor could return to their state of origin. Without VOCA supported services, this survivor would have been left to handle everything alone and would have potentially been forced to return to the home of the perpetrator while making plans to leave the area.

Bipartisan efforts are underway federally to create a long-term solution for the CVF, and your support in creating a bridge for organizations like ours to stabilize funding and our ability to offer life-saving services to survivors is essential. We know that supporting victims of crime is a nonpartisan issue, and these efforts will continue. There is a separate bill in the Oregon Senate to support a federal fix—[SJM 2 Urging Congress to fund VOCA](#).

For the above reasons, we urge you to support this request for bridge funding of VOCA grants by passing HB 3196. Crime victims and survivors in Oregon deserve the safety and well-being that these funds afford. Organizations like ours that provide these services cannot continue delivering them without your support. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Marcelene Kukal Manning, Executive Director

HAVEN from Domestic and Sexual Violence