

Submitter: Rachel Schutz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB710

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Rachel Schutz, the Executive Director of the Family Justice Center of Washington County, and I am here today in strong support of Senate Bill 710, which is critical for ensuring our judicial system understands and appropriately responds to cases of domestic and sexual violence.

I have spent almost 20 years in social services with children and families, seeing many, many cases of family violence. However, it was not until I began my time with the FJC and was immersed in the field that I truly understood the deep, insidious complexities of violence and abuse. That is because it is neither common knowledge nor common training, which makes this bill both unique and necessary.

Every day, survivors and their children enter courtrooms seeking safety and justice, yet too often face a judicial system that may not fully understand the complexities of family violence, coercive control, and trauma. This education gap can lead to devastating outcomes—underestimating an abuser’s danger, minimizing a survivor’s experience, or making custody decisions that put children at risk. As was the case in my career, this is not for lacking care for these survivors, but lack of understanding about what abuse really is and the impact it has.

My time in this field has taught me that rates of domestic and sexual violence in Oregon is higher than the national average, with a majority of Oregonians experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, or family trauma while they grow up. This means that education on the impacts of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trauma needs to become commonplace because it is unfortunately Oregon’s common experience.

Senate Bill 710 ensures that every circuit court judge receives trauma-informed, evidence-based education on the dynamics of abuse, risk factors for lethality, the impact on children, and more. This bill is not just about education—it’s about saving lives. When our judiciary is better informed, survivors are better protected, and justice is better served.

By passing this bill, Oregon has an opportunity to offer what survivors define as True Justice, being heard, being understood, and being believed.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 710 and ensure that every judge has the knowledge

necessary to make informed, life-changing decisions.

Thank you.