

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen 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).

In particular, as a woman, a member of our community, and a friend to multiple survivors of sexual assault, I urge you to support HB 3070 to ensure access to certified SANEs for survivors of sexual assault and professional support for Oregon's SANE workforce. Funding for HB 3070 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 while I would prefer to live in a place free from violence and abuse, I know we are not there yet. The next best hope I can have is that if I myself, or my daughter, or a friend experiences sexual abuse, there are trained professionals to assist in providing the best possible care, so that healing can begin. We need to have professional, trauma informed nurses available in order to refrain from causing further trauma, and having trust lost in our systems and community.

I have observed a SANE training held in my local community and can attest to the level of professionalism and care in both the instructors and the attendees. They are doing an incredibly difficult job, and with the correct training, they will also be able to move forward confidently in their roles. They are often the first response to a survivor, and those first conversations and the way a survivor is treated and informed is crucial to how they move forward.

In closing, we are asking you to support survivors of sexual assault and the SANE workforce that cares for them by passing HB 3070. 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,

Brooklyn Taggart
Eugene, Oregon