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**Testimony in Support of House Bill HB 2299
Before the House Judiciary Committee**

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Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), I submit this testimony in support of House Bill 2299. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.

This bill will close a dangerous loophole in our current statutes prohibiting the dissemination of sexually explicit images without consent and for the purpose of harassment – behavior sometimes known as “revenge porn.”

The Oregon Law Center’s mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon, by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. A significant number of our clients come to us for help as they are struggling to seek safety from domestic or sexual violence. About a third of our cases involve the issue of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Gender-based violence greatly contributes to the vulnerability of our clients, and further traps them in poverty and crisis. HB 2299 and other victim safety bills are important tools for the protection of our clients, and help remove barriers to success and justice for our clients.

Closing the loophole in the statute often referred to as the “revenge porn” statute is of particular and critical importance. Current law only prohibits the use of actual photos of the victim, as opposed to “deepfake” images. HB 2299 would expand the definition of an “image” to include ai-generated images, which can have just as damaging an impact as real photos to manipulate, intimidate, and harass victims. In addition, the bill would increase the sanctions for violation of these statutory prohibitions, creating greater consequences to deter and provide accountability for this extremely abusive behavior.

Revenge porn takes a well-documented and severe toll on victims. Survivors have suffered significant financial, psychological, and physical harm as a result of dissemination of sexually explicit images. It is not uncommon for a survivor to have to change their name, change their job or school, alter their appearance, and more, simply to even begin to recover.

The damages and harm wrought by revenge porn are devastating in any community, and are exacerbated in small communities. Survivors live with the constant fear of being retraumatized, because at any moment the electronic images could resurface. With the immense proliferation of new forms of social media, ensuring protection from this behavior is critical to the safety of victims and to holding perpetrators accountable.

We greatly appreciate the work of the sponsors and stakeholders in negotiating this language and bringing this bill forward to help protect survivors. We urge the committee to support this bill and thank you all for your consideration.

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