

March 18, 2025

Co-Chairs Campos and Valderrama, Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the **Center for Hope & Safety** we are submitting testimony in support of SB 5526, which appropriates money from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services for certain biennial expenses, including the Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors (TA-DVS).

The Center for Hope & Safety provides a safe environment for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion and Polk counties. We educate the public about the issues

surrounding victimization and operate programs that respond directly to the needs identified by survivors of violence. Our philosophy reflects the survivors' right to receive information about abuse and their right to make their own choices from a wide range of options.

Last year we provided over 10,000 nights of emergency shelter to survivors and their children fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking and served 11,300 survivors in-person. Victims fleeing abuse at home face many barriers to long-term and ongoing safety, and the shelter system is unable to address all these barriers. Our organization works closely with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), and we have co-located domestic violence advocates from our organization, working within many ODHS self-sufficiency and child welfare offices across Marion and Polk counties.

Thank you for the investment in the TA-DVS program, the increase of TA-DVS program funding from \$1,200 to \$3,200 has been life-changing for eligible families and pregnant survivors of domestic violence. Survivors and their families can use TA-DVS to help with critical needs around housing, such as deposits, first and last month's rent, utilities, new door locks, cameras and alarm systems. These funds can also be used to replace items left behind, like clothing, or other needed household items.

Recently, one of our co-located advocates supported a survivor fleeing her abuser. **The survivor knew she had a very small window of opportunity, so she ran from her home, picked up her children and walked into her local DHS office.** By that time of day, it was close to 5pm. Fortunately, she learned that she was going to be approved for TA-DVS, although the funds wouldn't be available that night. **This is where our partnership between non-profits like the Center for Hope & Safety and DHS is crucial in saving lives,** because we were able to support her with emergency shelter at a hotel that night and collaborate with DHS to ensure ongoing support with TA-DVS for shelter and housing.

Center for
**HOPE &
SAFETY**



605 Center St NE Salem, OR 97301 hopeandsafety.org
503-378-1572 office 503-399-7722 hotline

because everyone deserves a life free of violence

The Center for Hope & Safety has also supported countless survivors who were able to use the \$3,200 TA-DVS funds to pay for a deposit, first-month's and last-month's rent. In today's housing market, even low-income housing is unattainable without financial assistance that goes beyond \$3,200. If the amount drops back to \$1,200, it won't even cover one month of rent for most survivors and their children.

Gender-based violence is a major public health problem nationally and here in Oregon. Every year, approximately 20 people are killed because of intimate partner violence.

Thank you for prioritizing the needs of survivors and their children, because everyone deserves a life free of violence. The passing of this budget will change lives through historic investments in the Self-Sufficiency program at ODHS.

Sincerely,



Ashley Carson, Executive Director

Center for Hope & Safety