



## **Re: Funding for Life-Saving Services for Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors**

- **Policy Option Package 327:** Continue funding levels for Tribal and community-based programs providing confidential emergency shelter and critical safety services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking across the state (\$22 Million)
- **HB 3196:** Continue funding levels for interdisciplinary crime victim services programs at domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse programs across the state (\$18.5 Million)

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety:

My name is Nicole Cunningham and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCA Oregon) to urge support of funding for the specialized programs that support survivors of domestic and sexual violence and their children in the Department of Justice Budget's POP 327 and in HB 3196.

PCA Oregon is a state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America - the oldest and largest nonprofit dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. We focus most of our work on primary prevention efforts that get families the support they need before a crisis occurs. We also partner with many organizations that provide critical trauma-informed support to kids and families after harm has already occurred. These services are vital to ensure that further harm is prevented. These partners include Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) and Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) Programs.

Reflecting on my time as a Child Protective Services (CPS) worker for the State of Oregon, I remember being assigned to support families after a child experienced sexual abuse. In such situations, CPS workers collaborate with Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), which provide essential medical and forensic examinations and interviews to fully understand the scope and impact of the abuse. **These programs play a vital role in how we address child abuse in Oregon**, ensuring that trained professionals are always available to support children and families with a trauma-informed, person-centered approach that minimizes the risk of further harm.

The Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division of the Department of Justice provides critical safety net services and programs that can quite literally save the lives of survivors and their children fleeing violence and seeking safety and security. From 2009 through 2019, Oregon's Statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team identified a total of 393 fatal domestic violence incidents that resulted in 532 deaths. Children witnessed violence in nearly 1 in 4 (22%) intimate partner violence cases filed in state courts.

**The two packages outlined below are of critical importance to the lives of survivors and their children:**

**Department of Justice Budget POP 327: ONGOING FUNDING TO STABILIZE CRITICAL SURVIVOR SERVICES PROGRAMS (\$22M)**

Please ensure the inclusion of \$22 million in grant funding in the Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD) of the Department of Justice for Tribal, culturally specific, and community-based programs to continue providing confidential services to victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking across the state. Without this investment into ongoing funding, programs will be forced to lay off staff and will have reduced capacity to provide critical life-saving safety and advocacy services for survivors and their children.

**\$10 Million for ODSVS:** These funds provide support for the network of confidential, trauma-informed, community-based and culturally-specific programs providing shelter, safety planning, hotline, and advocacy services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence (DSV) and their children across the state.

**\$6 Million for the Survivor Housing Fund:** Survivor Housing Funds allow DVSA service providers to empower survivors in the next step of accessing safety from violence. These funds increase the chances at long-term stability and safety for survivors and their children. As Oregon's housing affordability crisis continues to reach new peaks, the Survivor Housing Funds are necessary to make it possible for victims to escape the cycle of abuse, and to establish stability for themselves and their children.

**\$6 Million for Children's Advocacy Centers:** CACs are the state's mandated and unique resource for the assessment, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect and the associated trauma, in order to promote health and hope in children, youth, families, and communities.

These investments are necessary to continue current levels of survivor services that were finally brought up to baseline minimal access levels in 2019 through one-time investments. In 2024, the Legislature recognized the importance of this increased capacity and unanimously passed HB 4140, which stated that these funds are to be considered current service level moving forward. If these investments are not continued, survivor services in communities across the state will suffer significant cuts. POP #327 cements the continuation of these funds.

**One-Time Funding to Prevent Cuts to Interdisciplinary Victim Services Programs (\$18.5 Million as in HB 3196)**

The Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is the primary source of federal grants for victim services, including services for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, attempted homicide, and other crimes. Oregon was notified of the 42% in federal funding cuts following the close of the 2024 short

Session. We need a one-time investment to continue important partnerships between service providers, prosecutors, law enforcement, and others serving victims of crime in every county in the state.

These issues are important to PCA Oregon because we believe investments in survivor-centered responses are critical to preventing further violence and abuse in our communities and are critical to helping survivors heal from trauma. At PCA Oregon, we envision an Oregon that is free of violence and abuse, where children and families are living happy purposeful lives with hope for the future. This vision includes ensuring that families have access to survivor-centered, trauma-informed services after experiences of violence and abuse. We urge you to join us in actualizing this vision by supporting Policy Option Package 327 and HB 3196.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

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