

April 18, 2025

Co-Chair Lieber, Co-Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

The **Center for Hope & Safety** is based in Salem and we serve victims and survivors in Marion and part of Polk Counties. Operating since 1973, the Center for Hope & Safety's mission is to provide a safe environment for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking and to educate the public about the issues surrounding victimization. Our program responds directly to the needs identified by survivors of violence and 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.



Formerly Mid-Valley Women's Crisis Service

Last year we served 11,300 survivors in person, provided over 10,000 nights of emergency shelter, and had 38,000 contacts to our organization for information, crisis services, and safety planning.

- ✓ **First**, to maintain our current level of service for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, the Legislature must fully fund the Department of Justice, Agency Request Budget, including the following:
 - **POP #327** ensures \$10M for ongoing Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (ODSVS) funding and \$6M in Survivor Housing Funds for domestic violence and sexual assault organizations. The total cost of the POP is \$22M and includes critical support for Children's Advocacy Centers too.
 - **House Bill 3196** continues funding levels for interdisciplinary crime victim services programs at domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse programs across the state at \$18.5M.
- ✓ **Second**, we request the inclusion of continued increased funding for Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors Program (TA-DVS) and the Co-Located Advocate program.
- ✓ **Third**, we request continuation of funding for our emergency shelter and housing options provided through Oregon Housing and Community Services grants.
- ✓ **Fourth**, we request continuation of funding through the Department of Corrections for the PREA support we provide to adults in custody (AICs) experiencing sexual assault.
- ✓ **Finally**, we request funding through the Capital Construction subcommittee in the amount of \$700,000 to complete critical safety updates to our main advocacy office building. Built in 1967, it is in dire need of roof and drywall replacement, electrical and HVAC upgrades, seismic retrofitting and parking lot replacement. This project is ready, has matching funding through the City of Salem and the environmental review is complete.

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503-378-1572 office • 503-399-7722 hotline**

because everyone deserves a life free of violence

When a survivor needs CHS services and support, the Advocacy Office is where it all begins – the 24-7 hotline and direct service advocacy happen in this location. Connections to emergency shelter, safety planning, clothing, food and other critical supports occur at the Advocacy Office daily.

The funding requests included in these agency budgets are crucial and lifesaving for the people we support daily.

In the words of one survivor after years of domestic violence, “I was scared, and you were there – I will never forget how you helped me move forward with my life. My children and I now have stable and safe housing. I want to thank the program for being able to help me with food boxes, shelter and clothes. Thank you for not leaving me alone when I had lost all hope in myself. Thank you for showing me I am worth so much more than I thought I was.”

Another survivor shared with us, “Thank you and the entire team, without your support I do not know where my girls and I would be. We had nowhere to live, I had no job, no car and no food – it was the winter and it was cold and rainy. You provided us with shelter, food, clothes, options for other resources. While we were in shelter, you made us feel protected and listened to us. Because of you, we are now living independently and have peace in our lives.”

The funds provided to our program through the State Budget is crucial. **Gender-based violence is a major public health problem nationally and here in Oregon.** Far too many people are killed because of intimate partner violence each year. Without this ongoing funding, programs like ours, all across Oregon, will be forced to lay off staff and will have severely reduced capacity to provide the lifesaving and life-changing advocacy services that are needed every day in Oregon.

Everyone deserves a life free of violence. Thank you for your time today and for your support of victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and child abuse.

Sincerely,



Ashley Carson
Executive Director