



**House Committee on Rules
Testimony in Support of HB 3582
May 12th, 2025**

Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drahan and Pham, and members of the committee:

As advocates dedicated to supporting survivors of sexual assault, we submit this testimony in support of House Bill 3582, which seeks to eliminate the statute of limitations for civil actions based on sexual assault and child sexual abuse. This legislation acknowledges the profound and enduring impact of sexual violence and better aligns legal avenues with the realities faced by survivors.

The Women's Foundation of Oregon's [Count Her In](#) Report indicates that Oregon women and girls are raped and sexually assaulted at rates that far exceed the national average. An extrapolation of Oregon survey data from the Centers for Disease Control indicates that perpetrators have sexually assaulted over 1 million women and girls in Oregon—more than half of the state's female population. An estimated 27% of Oregon women and girls have experienced rape; 56% have experienced sexual assault other than rape.

HB 3582 is one important step forward to provide additional remedies for survivors of this violence, and additional accountability for perpetrators.

Understanding Trauma and Delayed Disclosure

Survivors often face significant barriers that delay disclosure and legal action. The trauma associated with sexual assault can lead to prolonged periods of silence due to fear, shame, or psychological distress. Current statutes of limitations fail to accommodate these complexities, effectively denying many survivors the opportunity to seek justice:

- Many survivors may not even be aware of jurisdictional statutes of limitations, thus adding a layer of institutional betrayal to existing trauma if/when they come forward later to seek action from systems that are meant to support them.
- Safety risks may prevent someone from coming forward for a number of years; this may include ongoing stalking, monitoring, or control, as well as fear of retaliation if coming forward.
- Some survivors choose to wait until their child/children have grown or are no longer in their care as a way to buffer/mitigate harm that they may experience from their parent coming forward.

- Fear of losing one's job and economic stability can prevent survivors from coming forward until they have: sufficient savings, retirement, additional economic support, other resources in place to manage any impact in this regard.

Expanding this statute will let survivors know that systems acknowledge these realities, and are adapting to meet their needs, believe them, and provide opportunities for remedies that may not have been possible before.

Aligning Legal Frameworks with Survivor Needs

By removing arbitrary time constraints, HB 3582 empowers survivors to come forward when they are ready, ensuring that justice is not denied due to procedural deadlines. This change reflects an understanding of trauma's lasting effects and the diverse timelines of healing and readiness to pursue legal action. Expanding pathways to civil justice for survivors is one of the most impactful ways that the economic impacts can be mitigated and/or overcome:

- Sexual violence survivors experience reduced income in adulthood as a result of victimization in adolescence, with a lifetime income loss estimated at \$241,600¹. Sexual abuse interferes with women's ability to work ([Lyon, 2002](#)).
- [A 2017 study](#) estimated the annual lifetime cost of rape to be \$122,461 per each victim. This includes costs incurred to access medical care, legal support, counseling, lost time off of work, and more.

Eliminating the statute of limitations removes a barrier to pursuit of redress for the economic harm suffered by survivors.

Promoting Accountability and Prevention

Eliminating the statute of limitations not only facilitates justice for survivors but also holds perpetrators accountable, potentially preventing further offenses. It sends a clear message that sexual violence is a grave violation with enduring consequences, reinforcing societal condemnation of such acts. While data on sexual violence perpetration is complex, we know that many adult perpetrators will continue to harm multiple victims over time if there is not effective action taken to stop the behavior. Expanding avenues for survivors to come forward publicly is one method of bringing awareness to specific perpetrators doing harm and to intervene to protect others.

Conclusion

One of the most significant aspects of trauma for many survivors of sexual violence is the complete lack of control over what has happened to them. As a field of advocates, we know that giving control back to survivors can be a profoundly healing act. This is one way to do that. Reducing barriers to multiple options for justice for survivors creates more opportunities for healing.

HB 3582 complements other legislative initiatives aimed at supporting survivors and addressing sexual violence comprehensively. Passage of this bill will further demonstrate Oregon's commitment to justice and support for survivors of sexual assault and child sexual abuse. This legislation is a crucial step toward a legal system that truly understands and accommodates the needs of survivors.

¹ MacMillan, R. (2000). Adolescent victimization and income deficits in adulthood: Rethinking the costs of criminal violence from a life-course perspective, *Criminology*, 38, 553-588. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2000.tb00899.

For all of these reasons, we urge your support.

Sincerely,

The Alliance to End Gender-Based Violence Steering Committee

Niki Terzieff: Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence,
niki@leadingedgepublicaffairs.com

Shannon Rose: Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, director@oregonsatf.org

Sybil Hebb: Oregon Law Center, shebb@oregonlawcenter.org

Melissa Erlbaum: Clackamas Women's Services, melissae@cwsor.org

Emmy Ritter: Raphael House, ERitter@raphaelhouse.com

Ashley Carson: Center for Hope and Safety, ashley@hopeandsafety.org

Founded in 1999, the Oregon Alliance to End Gender Based Violence is a statewide grassroots organization dedicated to promoting legislation in Oregon that will protect and empower survivors of domestic and sexual violence.