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DATE: February 2, 2023

TO: Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Wallan and Andersen, and
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Kimberly McCullough, Legislative Director
Oregon Department of Justice

SUBJECT: HB 2933 Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Funding
HB 3018 Housing Assistance for Victims and Survivors

The Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) urges your support of HB 2933 and HB 3018, which provide \$10 million for the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund (ODSVS) and \$6 million to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault with housing needs, respectively.

These funds are essential for providing safety and assistance to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence. The funding, administered by DOJ's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division (CVSSD), will include homelessness prevention, housing search assistance, tenant education and funding for rent, utilities, moving costs, deposits, application fees and safe emergency housing. It will also promote advocacy interventions to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault through grants to sixty non-profit organizations and Tribal Nations victim services programs that provide advocacy services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

A long-term investment in housing assistance and ODSVS will provide the resources to further develop capacity and build a statewide infrastructure designed for sustainability and equity in domestic and sexual violence advocacy services. This will also add strength to and expand the network of organizations that provide culturally specific advocacy services to survivors.

Understanding this need, the legislature previously allocated funding on a one-time basis for these purposes. But one-time funding only temporarily addresses the chronic challenges faced by these community-based organizations. A permanent increase is necessary to meet the rising and ever-present demand for advocacy services, to offer wages comparable to government and business sectors, and to recruit and retain skilled workers and administrators.

In 2020, these organizations provided emergency shelter to a record 5,250 survivors and over 27,000 received safety planning and advocacy services. This work is accomplished while organizations continue to operate at reduced staffing levels and strained administrative capacity. For many organizations, direct service staff are paid just above minimum wage and there is a high rate of turnover among positions.

Full funding of these services is essential to support crime victims and survivors in Oregon and the organizations and providers who serve them. DOJ urges the committee to support the passage of these bills.

Contact:

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