To: Co-Chair Senator Jackie Winters
       Co-Chair Representative Carla Piluso
       Members of the Joint Committee on Public Safety

From: Shannon Rose, Multnomah County Domestic & Sexual Violence Program Specialist Senior

RE: Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Fund: DOJ Budget Item - SB 5515

On behalf of the Multnomah County Department of Human Services (DCHS), I submit this written testimony in support of a budget increase for the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (ODSVS) fund in the amount of $10 million per biennium.

At the Multnomah County Domestic and Sexual Violence Coordination Office (part of DCHS), we work as both a funder and a partner to a committed network of community-based victim service providers providing life-saving support and resources to survivors within Multnomah County. We know that ODSVS is a critical part of the infrastructure we have created in our state to provide necessary supports and safety mechanisms to survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Current ODSVS funding levels remain insufficient to meet the needs of survivors in Multnomah County and throughout our state and we need to double down on current investment levels to assist more survivors at risk.

A spectrum of services is needed to ensure survivors have what critical resources to increase safety, including advocacy, safety planning, shelter and housing, legal support, transportation, childcare, and systems navigation. As advocates, researchers, and policy makers we well know that the impacts of trauma and the onslaught of post-separation abuse and manipulation can last for years. While it is imperative that survivors are met with robust responses when they experience crisis, we hear from survivors over and over again that having access to community, connection, advocates, and resources can be just as important in the months following an initial crisis or exit from an unsafe relationship. Advocacy services for the longer-term, that are stepped down appropriately over the course of 1-2 years often make a huge impact on whether that survivor and their family will be able to maintain mental, emotional, financial, and physical safety and well-being in the often chaotic and stressful time of healing and stabilization post-abuse or assault.

Many other funding sources, including other federal, state, and city funds come with regulations and restrictions that limit the ways such funding can be used, leaving gap in a service system that survivors may fall through. ODSVS is the only source of general funds available throughout Oregon for programs to be able to use in the ways that can meet these unmet needs - including longer term advocacy for survivors and their children, culturally specific and responsive programming to reach underserved communities, and for critical resources often not funded by

other means, including transportation to job programs, legal assistance, and mental and emotional health supports.

ODSVS is not only a source of funding for domestic and sexual violence intervention, but also prevention funding. The services funded by ODSVS help keep survivors safe for the long haul, reduce risk of reassault, and build up the strength and healing of safe parents and their children. A 2006 joint DOJ/DHS equity report found that $32 million each biennium is needed to provide an adequate level of service and protection for survivors in Oregon, and yet the current ODSVS funding level is $10 million.   We know that budget investments are being looked at closely as a variety of important needs may vie for a limited amount of dollars. We also know that survivors and their children rely on this critical resource to help them on the path forward from abuse to safety and stability. For this reason, we ask that you double down on this investment and increase funding levels to $20 million for the next biennium.

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