

May 13, 2015

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

The Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities submits this testimony in support of HB 3476.

Awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking and dating violence on campuses has grown immensely in the past several years. Prompted by federal guidance for Title IX compliance in 2011, colleges and universities across Oregon and the nation have been striving to improve interpersonal violence prevention and intervention programs and services. Institutions have focused on survivor-centered practices, anonymous reporting, updated and more responsive policies, bystander intervention, and community education.

A significant challenge for colleges and universities is providing adequate crisis intervention and counseling services for those who have been harmed. Many schools have augmented resources to victims by supporting peer or community advocacy on their campuses. While most institutions have counseling staff that adhere to confidentiality standards as part of licensure requirements, there are no similar protections for communication with peer advocates. Protecting confidentiality and ensuring privacy and anonymity are critical to a survivor's confidence when seeking support and resources. In the aftermath of interpersonal violence, the inability to talk to someone about the experience and gather information about choices and resources without fearing the risk of exposure has a chilling effect on the survivor seeking help.

HB 3476 provides three critical protections for people harmed by interpersonal violence:

- Standardizes certification including core training for advocates
- Legally establishes confidentiality requirements for certified advocates
- Legally establishes privileged communication between survivor and advocate that protects forced disclosure by subpoena

Providing certification standards and confidentiality requirements for advocates, and establishing legally privileged communication between survivors and certified advocates will be significant steps forward in providing quality services for those who have been harmed on campus.

The Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities joins with campus and community advocates across the state to ask you to support HB 3476.

Sincerely,



Larry D. Large
President
Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities
cc: Cindy Robert