



**PARTNERSHIP FOR
SAFETY & JUSTICE**

**Submitted to the Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety
Thursday, March 14, 2019**

**Testimony in Support of Increased funding for ODSVS at the Department of Justice
By Amy Davidson, Crime Survivor Program Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice**

Co-Chair Winters, Co-Chair Piluso, and Members of the Subcommittee,

My name is Amy Davidson, and I'm the Crime Survivor Program Director at Partnership for Safety and Justice. Partnership for Safety and Justice is a statewide, non-profit organization that advances state and local solutions that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both.

On behalf of Partnership for Safety and Justice, I respectfully request your support of a \$10 million increase in funding for the Oregon Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (ODSVS) Fund housed at the Department of Justice in the 2019-2021 biennium.

I have advocated for survivors of abuse in Oregon for the past 16 years, most of that time spent providing critical services to survivors in Central Oregon. Given that background, I know that when survivors get the help they need before, during, and after experiencing abuse, they are less likely to be revictimized. Ample access to services reduces the incidence of re-assault by 70%. In this way, ODSVS acts as critical support to those who have been harmed, but also prevents further abuse from occurring unnecessarily, particularly for those who are most harmed and least helped.

We know that domestic and sexual assault survivor services are funded at less than 50% of what is needed, and this tremendous gap disproportionately affects some people and communities more than others. Rural survivors experience unique barriers to accessing services, like a lack of confidentiality in an area where so many community members know each other. Travel is another significant barrier in regions where service gaps are common.

Similarly, survivors of color are disproportionately impacted by violence, while at the same time, many feel their needs are not recognized by the systems and services available to them. Three out of four survivors of color will never report the harm they've experienced due to a lack of trust in systems that sometimes fall short of protecting them, deepening disparities and making their voices even harder to hear.

Imagine taking life-threatening risks to overcome these barriers, only to learn that shelters are full, gas and hotel vouchers are used up and now you are trapped in unfamiliar surroundings, without the option to return home, without the help you need to take the next step toward staying safe and avoiding further harm. These are the lifelines that ODSVS funds that prevent victims from returning to harm for lack of having any other option. Nobody should have to make that choice.

As a public safety reform organization, Partnership for Safety and Justice is committed to building a more effective and responsive criminal justice system that ensures accountability, equity, and healing for all those impacted by harm and the criminal justice system. Crime survivor services funding is fundamental to this reform, and we strongly urge your support for additional investment in ODSVS so that Oregon can continue our work in building a public safety system that builds strong families, safe communities, and a just society.