



Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

July 19, 2018

Testimony to Oregon State Capitol Workplace Harassment Work Group

Mr. Shetterly and Members of the Work Group,

The Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF) seeks to facilitate cross-discipline collaboration and cultivate victim-centered approaches to sexual assault primary prevention, victim advocacy, medical forensic care, criminal prosecution, and sex offender management and treatment.

Our mission is to facilitate and support a collaborative, survivor-centered approach to the prevention of and response to sexual violence. We accomplish our mission by advancing primary prevention and providing multi-disciplinary training and technical assistance to responders in Oregon and nationally.

We believe that sexual violence, including workplace harassment, is preventable, and that all Oregonians have a right to access their workplace free of violence. Workplace harassment brings with it unique challenges, especially at the Capitol, including authority and power dynamics, shame and fear of retaliation when coming forward, and challenges to preserving a victim's privacy. We hope that this work group takes these concerns into consideration, while also aiming to identify policy that will foster a zero-tolerance precedent toward harassment at the Capitol.

Privacy and fear of retaliation are often barriers for victims of harassment that prevent them from coming forward and reporting. Victims often have to weigh their options in reporting with the risk of personal safety, professional and social retaliation, as well as personal details about an intimate experience being opened up to public commentary. No employee in Oregon should have to weigh such concerns when seeking a safe workplace. Every person who works at or accesses the Capitol should have a safe space to do so.

We are encouraged to see the Oregon Law Commission bring together experts to identify best practices in moving forward as we strive to create a safer working environment at the Capitol. SATF staff, community partners, and interns frequent the Capitol as we create dialogue around legislative advocacy for victims of violence in Oregon, and we take pride in the opportunity to do that work and share that space.

Sincerely,

Michele Roland-Schwartz,
Executive Director
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force