

## **GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

An increasingly significant portion of criminal offenses in Oregon stem from domestic violence; its consequences are serious and visible. Fortunately, grassroots community organizations and both state and national advocacy groups have heightened awareness of domestic violence, removing the veil behind which domestic violence remained for so long due to the perception that it constituted solely a private, family, or women's matter best addressed through means other than public intervention.

Contrary to that perception, the effects of domestic violence are widespread, crossing all social, racial and ethnic boundaries. Failure to adequately and comprehensively respond to domestic violence threatens to impede Oregon's progress toward achieving its economic, housing, health, educational, community empowerment, and quality-of-life goals. Specifically, domestic violence impacts

Women. Domestic violence is directed toward women in nearly 95% of reported cases nationwide, hindering women's pursuit of their basic human rights.

Crime. During a six month period during 1995, Oregon law enforcement officers responded to 23, 247 domestic violence incidents. Furthermore, twenty percent of all homicides in Oregon from the period 1991-1995 were the result of domestic violence.

Housing. Forty-three percent of homeless women and children nationwide report domestic violence as the primary cause of their homelessness. In Oregon, approximately eighty percent of all domestic violence victims are unable to take advantage of shelter facilities due to those facilities' lack of space.

The economy. Nationwide, domestic violence costs American businesses an estimated three to five billion dollars annually in lost work time, increased health-care costs, higher employee turnover, and lowered worker productivity.

Drugs. Nationwide, forty-five percent of female alcoholics report a history of spousal battering; ninety percent of pregnant substance abuse users taking part in the Multnomah County Corrections' ADAPT programs are victims of either domestic violence or sexual assault.

Public health. Nationwide, spousal abuse accounts for one in five medical visits by women and thirty percent of all emergency room visits. Eight percent of pregnant women in the United States are battered during their pregnancies. These women are twice as likely to miscarry, and four times as likely to give birth to low-birth weight infants. One out of every four female suicide attempts in the United States is preceded by spousal abuse. Across America, domestic violence results in an estimated loss of \$100 million annually in abuse-related medical bills.

Education. With one in eight film scenes depicting an act of rape, our educational system must teach our children that violence toward women is unacceptable. In one nationwide study, eighty percent of high school students believed that a husband was justified in forcing his wife to engage in sexual relations.

Utilizing a grant from the State Justice Institute, the Oregon Judicial Department created the Oregon Domestic Violence Council in 1994. Under the direction of leading members of the Oregon judiciary and with the involvement of the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, the Council developed a coordinated community, county, and state-wide response to domestic violence, as well as protocols for law enforcement, the judiciary, the educational system, local advocacy groups, and health professionals.

The Council formulated statewide needs-assessments, while compiling data and research on domestic violence. Ultimately, the Council provided the framework for the work that remains to be done, if Oregon is to respond effectively to domestic violence.

Without the Council, current levels of research will not alter the fact we lack sufficient information regarding the causes and effects of domestic violence. The Council provided the framework for such research, as well as the development of strategies to respond effectively to domestic violence, to occur.

**THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND DIRECTED:**

1) The Governor's Council on Domestic Violence is hereby created. The Council shall consist of ten members, appointed by the Governor; the Governor shall appoint a chair of the Council from among the ten members.

Five of the Council's ten members shall consist of persons currently active in the domestic violence field, while the remaining five members shall consist of lay citizens with diverse backgrounds and experiences. The composition of the Council shall reflect the multi-cultural composition of the state of Oregon to the greatest extent possible.

Council members shall serve staggered terms; thus, initially, the terms of four member shall expire on November 1, 1998, the terms of three members shall expire on November 1, 1999, and the terms of the remaining three members shall expire on November 1, 2000. Thereafter, all members shall serve terms of four years' length.

The Council may add non-voting ex officio members, associate members, and subcommittees as it deems appropriate. No members of the Council, regardless of their status as voting members, ex officio members, associate members, or any other classification, are entitled to compensation for their services.

2) The Council shall establish procedures to ensure public input; such procedures shall include notice to both domestic violence-related groups and interested individuals of public meetings held at such time and places as the Council shall determine. However, as a body which reports solely to the Governor, the Council is not subject to Oregon's public meetings law.

3) Creation of the Council signals a statewide initiative targeting violence against women and children. The Council shall determine how the state might best work to support the development of a coordinated community, county, and state-wide response for the prevention of domestic violence and protection of domestic violence victims, and accordingly shall recommend strategies aimed toward the prevention and reduction of domestic violence.

4) Initially, the Council shall consider additions to the statewide needs assessment conducted by the Oregon Domestic Violence Council, including, but not limited to,

a) needs specific or unique to racial, ethnic, or rural communities, based in part on the incidence of domestic violence within those communities;

b) the cost of fully funding domestic violence services for all domestic victims and their children;

c) the need for changes in the manner in which the Law Enforcement Data System enters domestic violence reports so that the system reflects a unified, coherent database from which state-wide analysis is possible;

d) law-reform needs which become apparent after a review designed to assess how provisions of state statutory law, the Oregon Administrative Rules, and state substantive law relating to juvenile justice issues impact domestic violence; this review shall specifically focus upon ORS 133.055 and ORS 133.310(3), Oregon's mandatory arrest statutes.

5) The Council shall review current state and private work-place policies regarding domestic violence and work with public and private employers, as well as labor unions and other employee representatives, in order to improve those policies based upon the goals which underlay the Council's strategies to prevent and reduce domestic violence.

6) The Council shall review practices and training standards for medical health professionals, as well as members of other professions whose tasks and duties place them in frequent contact with persons involved in domestic violence. Upon review, the Council shall recommend practices and training standards which empower such professionals to act in furtherance of the Council's strategies to prevent and reduce domestic violence.

7) The Council shall submit an initial report which details its recommendations and updated statewide needs assessment, as well as generally stating its progress toward

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. EO 96 - 39

Page Five

the goals, strategies, and directives of this Order, to the Governor by March 1, 1997; it shall submit a similar report by the same date every year thereafter.

Done at Salem, Oregon, this 24th day of October, 1996.

---

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.  
Governor

---

Phil Keisling  
Secretary of State