

OREGON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE



SUPPORT HB 2975 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY FEBRUARY 26, 2025

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

Thank you for considering this testimony. **On behalf of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force (Oregon SATF), we are submitting testimony in support of HB 2975.**

Formed in 1999 by then Attorney General Hardy Meyers, the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (or Oregon SATF) is a statewide, nongovernmental nonprofit. 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.

Domestic violence (including sexual violence) is a distinct and complex crime that often involves a pattern of coercion, control, and repeated victimization, making it fundamentally different from other isolated criminal acts.

Survivors of domestic violence, particularly those who have also experienced sexual assault, frequently endure multiple forms of abuse, including strangulation, harassment, and psychological manipulation. Strangulation is a disturbingly common form of violence in sexual assault and domestic violence cases, often used as a tool of power and control by people who cause harm. Studies indicate that between 30% to 68% of women who experience intimate partner violence and sexual assault also report being strangled by their abuser. Survivors of strangulation are at significantly higher risk of serious injury, long-term trauma, and even homicide, as non-fatal strangulation increases the likelihood of future lethal violence by more than 700%.

Despite its prevalence, strangulation is frequently underreported and misunderstood, making it crucial for the Oregon justice system to recognize and address this life-threatening form of assault with the seriousness and explicitness it demands.

By allowing for strangulation to be recognized separately (not merged), the justice system can ensure that more elements of an offense are accurately considered, leading to more appropriate charges, sentencing, and victim protections.

Without these crimes being recognized independently, key aspects of the survivor's experience may be overlooked, diminishing the ability to hold the person(s) who have harmed them fully accountable. Recognizing stalking separately for the purposes of adjudication is beneficial for survivor healing and public safety. **For the above reasons, we urge you to support HB 2975 and support survivors in Oregon.**

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I welcome any opportunity to answer questions or share more about this work with you.

Sincerely,



Shannon Rose
Executive Director
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force

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