

OREGON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE



SUPPORT HB 2299 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY FEBRUARY 27, 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 2299.**

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.

In 2019, our agency proudly supported and partnered with Attorney General Rosenblum to initiate Oregon's first law banning the illegal dissemination of intimate images (HB 2393). Since then, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images (colloquially referred to as "revenge porn"), has become an increasingly prevalent form of abuse in our digital age.

The impacts of this form of abuse on survivors are severe and enduring, and include emotional distress, reputational harm, being subject to control and manipulation through holding such images as blackmail, and threats to their physical safety and wellbeing. One analysis of qualitative studies on the issue indicates that there is emerging evidence suggesting **that this form of abuse increases the risk toward depression and suicidal ideation for survivors and may increase experiences of bullying, name-calling, and social isolation, thus leading to further trauma.***

Survivors often face significant challenges in seeking justice due to outdated or inadequate legislation that has failed to keep up with evolving technology. In this case technology has outpaced our existing legal framework, leaving survivors vulnerable and underserved. It is crucial that our laws keep pace with rapid advancements in digital communication to ensure justice, protection, and support for those affected.

Here are some key reasons why we believe passing HB 2299 is imperative this session:

1. Protection of Individual Privacy: The unauthorized sharing of intimate images (actual or digitally generated to appear actual) is a direct violation of an individual's privacy rights. Strengthening current statutes and penalties will send a clear message that such behavior is not only unacceptable but unlawful.

2. Empowerment of Survivors: A robust legal framework that addresses contemporary strategies of abuse empowers survivors to seek justice and reclaim control over their lives. Adequate legislation ensures that survivors have the necessary tools to hold those who have harmed them accountable for their actions.

3. Prevention of Further Harm: Updating our current statute to include modern forms of technological abuse, such as digitally enhanced images or the use of AI to create realistic impersonations of a survivor, sends a powerful deterrent message to potential perpetrators. Clear and enforceable laws act as a deterrent, contributing to the prevention of future instances of the illegal dissemination of intimate images.

4. Adaptation to Digital Realities: The ubiquity of technological platforms and tools that can be used to distribute, create, or otherwise alter content that would harm survivors necessitates legislative updates that account for the unique challenges posed by the digital dissemination of intimate images. Adapting our statutes to address these challenges is essential for effective legal recourse **For the above reasons, we urge you to support HB 2299 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Rose". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shannon Rose
Executive Director
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force

*Schmidt F, Varese F, Larkin A, Bucci S. The Mental Health and Social Implications of Nonconsensual Sharing of Intimate Images on Youth: A Systematic Review. *Trauma Violence Abuse*. 2024 Jul;25(3):2158-2172. doi: 10.1177/15248380231207896. Epub 2023 Nov 16. PMID: 37970838; PMCID: PMC11155207.