

OREGON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT TASK FORCE



SUPPORT HB 3582: ELIMINATION OF THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR CIVIL ACTIONS BASED ON SEXUAL ASSAULT AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

MAY 14, 2025

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chairs Drazan and Pham, and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

My name is Shannon Rose. I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force, a nonprofit working to prevent, and improve responses to, sexual violence across the state of Oregon. I am here to testify in strong support of HB 3582, which seeks to eliminate the statute of limitations for civil actions based on sexual assault and child sexual abuse.

Our organization was founded in 1999 through the leadership of Attorney General Hardy Myers and Community Advocates because there existed a need to better understand and address the problem of sexual violence, as well as to expand access to justice for survivors of sexual assault. In the years since our founding, we have collectively come a long way in improving outcomes and systems for victims and survivors, but the issue of statutes of limitations persists as an outdated barrier.

Eliminating the statute of limitations is a necessary step in order to create a clear pathway to justice for those impacted by sexual assault and abuse. Arbitrary limits on when a civil action can be brought forward are out of alignment with the modern understanding of how sexual trauma impacts human beings. It is also out of alignment with the messages our justice and advocacy systems have sent to survivors over the last decade.

We tell our community members to come forward. That they will be heard and provided a space to seek accountability and justice for what happened to them. The current law places unnecessary restrictions on when those opportunities are permitted and does not take into account critical factors that may delay reporting, including the lack of safety to do

so, fear of retribution and retaliation, or the mental toll of preparing to revisit the very worst moments of their lives in a public setting. HB 3582 is a commitment to victims and survivors that our civil court systems will live up to those messages and provide space for justice to be pursued.

Finally, this bill strengthens our statewide systems of accountability for those perpetrating violence and abuse. Despite prevailing myths, the majority of those perpetrating sexual violence are people already known to the victim. Some of these perpetrators will continue to use intimidation and fear tactics to silence victims. Eliminating the statute of limitations makes this continued abuse more difficult and less effective, as survivors are provided more time and space to create a network of support and resources that allows them to safely come forward with their experiences. **It sends a clear message to those perpetrating violence that our civil court systems will be there to hear these cases when the time is right and to our large community that sexual abuse and violence is not to be tolerated in any time or space.**

I urge you to pass HB 3582 and to thereby improve safety, access, and pathways to justice for victims and survivors of sexual violence and abuse.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon Rose".

Shannon Rose
Executive Director
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force