

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee Members;

My name is Matt Swanson and I am writing you in support of SB 1553 and 1571. This is important to me because as a life long Oregonian and 18 year Law Enforcement veteran, I have seen victims denied justice.

Recently I uncovered concerning information regarding the failure to investigate dozens of rape and sexual assaults over a period of almost 6 years at my agency. The victims include women, children, and teen boys and girls. They were brave enough to come forward and should have expected a professional response from law enforcement. Instead they were let down. This includes a failure to contact named and identified suspects, testing sexual assault evidence, and willful misinformation in police reports to justify inaction. This disrespects the basic human rights of victims. As result there are dozens of victims who have had justice denied.

After I uncovered this failure of public trust, I along with a select few of my co-workers feverishly went to work to investigate many cases before the statute of limitations expired.

To no fault of their own, many victims were/are in jeopardy of having justice denied solely due to the failures of those who swore an oath to protect them. I believe it is necessary to shore up laws to ensure if a victim of sexual assault is let down by law enforcement, there is more time to investigate and prosecute their case. That is why increasing the statute of limitations is so important.

In the course of trying to rectify the problem I uncovered, I found various loopholes and gaps in the law and administrative rules that make it difficult for someone like me to pursue accountability; but I believe most important is justice for victims, which these laws can help provide.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with members of the committee or their staff about my experience and observations and how I could help ensure something like what I uncovered never happens again.

Sincerely,

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