



## Debate over grand jury bill should focus on victims (OPINION)

senate.JPG

The Oregon Senate as a vote is tallied on May 14 at the Capitol in Salem. *(Randy Rasmussen/Staff)*

**Guest Columnist By Guest Columnist**

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**By Angela Foster**

When a proposed bill is batted about in the court of public opinion, too often the focus degenerates into political posturing and attacks from both sides. Recent opinions written by attorneys **Harry Carson** and **Dana Sullivan** about Senate Bill 822 (proposal to record all grand juries) have tried to shift the focus away from the bill's serious flaws and turn it into an attack on district attorneys and their "cunning attempt" to misdirect the focus of the bill.

In his recent opinion piece, Carson claimed SB 822 "is about fairness and transparency in the prosecution of those accused of crimes." But he fails to adequately address the very real threats it poses to victims and witnesses who are required to testify. As the bill currently stands, all personal information of victims would be handed over to defense attorneys. This could include medical records, financial information and a home address.

On June 12, 2011, my 11-week-old son Bryan was shaken and beaten to death by his father when I was teaching piano lessons. Last week marked the four-year anniversary of Bryan's violent death. My son's last day on this earth is as clear today as it was four years ago. The overwhelming sense of grief and loss that I feel over what could have been will never fade.

The day Bryan died, I gently held his battered body as I tried to comfort him and make sense of what had happened. I simply could not believe that the man I married and loved was capable of such violence. He assured me it was a terrible accident.

For two weeks after my son's death, I believed my husband's lies. It wasn't until about 10 minutes before I testified at the grand jury hearing that I found out the truth – my husband was searching the Internet about child abuse and was trying to find ways to stop hurting our twin boys.

When I found out about my husband's Internet searches the day of the grand jury hearing, I crumpled to the ground and couldn't stop screaming and crying. My heart could not understand what I had just heard, but my mind knew the truth. Only minutes later, I testified in front of the grand jury. I answered their questions truthfully, but grew increasingly afraid for my safety.