



Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

Testimony in support of SB 762

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Submitted by: Michele Roland-Schwartz, Executive Director

February 28, 2017

Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force (SATF), I am submitting this letter in support of SB 762, which will provide immunity from arrest or prosecution for victims of sexual assault under the age of 21, who seek medical services or contact law enforcement and were found to have purchased or were in possession of alcohol.

SATF is a statewide non-profit organization whose mission is to advance a multi-disciplinary¹, survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach to the response to and prevention of sexual violence in Oregon.

Oregon is second in the nation, after Alaska, in rates of sexual violence against women² – and yet sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes in the country due to the many barriers to reporting sexual assault.

People under the age of 21 experience some of the highest rates of sexual assault, and experience some of the strongest barriers to accessing services. Alcohol is recognized as the most commonly used substance in drug-facilitated sexual assault³ and serves one of the biggest barriers for this population accessing services. Victims often blame themselves or are concerned about sanctions against them if they are under age. We believe that passage and implementation of SB 762 will effectively reduce barriers to accessing services and is a strong message to victims that they are not to blame. SB 762 aligns with best practices that many law enforcement agencies and medical providers have already made a commitment to, however this bill would provide statutory assurance. For these reasons we urge your support of SB 762.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MRS", is written over a circular stamp or seal. Below the signature, the name and title of the signatory are printed.

Michele Roland-Schwartz
Executive Director

¹ SATF members serve on 1 of 8 subcommittees, including: Campus, Criminal Justice, Legislative & Public Policy, Medical-Forensic, Men's Engagement, Offender Management, Prevention & Education, and Victim Response. Members are appointed by the Oregon Attorney General, although SATF is a statewide nonprofit with 501(c) 3 status.

² Prevalence and Characteristics of Sexual Violence, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization— National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/summaryreports.html>

³ Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault, RAINN: <https://www.rainn.org/articles/drug-facilitated-sexual-assault>