

May 9, 2017

The Honorable Chair Barker
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Women's Health and Wellness Alliance (OWHWA) is a group of legislators, health care personnel, state and local agency staff and citizen advocates dedicated to promoting the health, safety and economic well-being of women. Together, the Co-Chairs of the OWHWA encourage your support for SB 762.

Individuals under the age of twenty-one are among the most at risk for experiencing sexual assault. In fact, one in five women and one in sixteen men are sexually assaulted during their college experience. Half of the cases reported happen in situations where alcohol is involved, and it is well known that alcohol is the most common drug used to facilitate sexual assault. Unfortunately, less than ten percent of sexual assault cases are reported. A major contributing factor to the low rates of reporting is the fear of victims being charged with crimes related to their alcohol use when seeking help. This barrier often prevents victims from getting the support they need in their time of crisis, and the perpetrator is not held accountable for the crime

SB 762, grants immunity to anyone who is in possession of or under the influence of alcohol when they are reporting sexual assault or seeking medical attention, and makes certain that others who are assisting the victim have those same protections. This bill will help to eliminate the fear associated with reporting sexual assault and create greater access to resources for those in need.

SB 762 will put survivors first, prioritizing their needs to access resources and seek assistance should they choose. We urge your strong support for SB 762.

Sincerely,

The OWHWA Co-Chairs:



Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward



Representative Karin Power



Senator Kathleen Taylor



Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer