



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

May 12, 2017

To: House Judiciary Committee
Representative Jeff Barker, Chair

Re: SB 261 – Civil Rape Shield Law – **Support**

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots, nonpartisan organization that strongly believes in “the constitutional right of privacy of the individual.” Moreover, we believe that Oregon’s citizens must have “access to its courts that meet the diverse needs of all people.” SB 261 would help survivors of sexual assault seek and obtain restitution for the crimes committed against them.

The decision to move forward with a sexual assault case is especially difficult. Many victims are reluctant to relive the traumatic incident and often face undue embarrassment and harassment. This becomes doubly problematic if the perpetrator is permitted to bring the unrelated sexual history of the victim into the discussion. SB 261 would make evidence about the sexual behavior or predisposition of the victim inadmissible in civil proceedings with exceptions under certain conditions.

Past sexual history is not relevant in a given case, nor is the way the victim dresses, or dances, or flirts. Past consensual sex is not relevant. What needs to be considered is whether or not the survivor consented to sex with the alleged perpetrator in this specific incident.

The threat of further embarrassment and distress may cause victims to not avail themselves of the full protection offered by law, both the criminal and civil courts.

Oregon currently has provisions to protect victims from such irrelevant information in criminal trials. SB 261 extends that protection to victims seeking civil remedies.

The League of Women Voters urges your support of SB 261.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Norman Turrill".

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Runciman".

Debbie Runciman
LWVOR Women’s Issues Coordinator