



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 16, 2017

TO: Honorable Arnie Roblan, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor

FROM: Aaron Knott, Legislative Director

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 318 – Healthy Teen Relationship Act

This testimony is presented in support of Senate Bill 318.

BACKGROUND

Teen dating violence disrupts adolescents' development into healthy, productive adults. Last year, the Women's Foundation of Oregon published "Count Her In", a comprehensive report on women and girls in Oregon. This report contained an alarming statistic – one million, or over half of Oregon women and girls, have experienced some form of sexual or domestic violence. This is one of the highest rates in the country. The same report demonstrated the tremendous cost to the State as a result of this violence. Domestic and sexual violence is learned and practiced at an early age. Findings from a 2013 national youth risk behavior survey found that nearly 20.9% of female high school students and 13.5% of male high school students report being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner. Love Is Respect.org reported in 2011 that 43% of dating college women reporting experiencing abusive behaviors from their partners.

How do we stop this violence and protect our children? What tools do we give them to become healthy, productive adults who respect their intimate partners? The answer begins with investments in primary prevention programs with the K-12 education system that are focused on interpersonal violence, including teen dating violence, domestic violence and sexual assault.

Oregon took a good first step in 2012 with the passage of the Healthy Teen Relationship Act, now ORS 339.366. HTRA as it is known, was a bi-partisan effort to address the issue of teen dating violence and domestic violence in Oregon schools. HTRA requires that each school district adopt a policy that prohibits teen dating violence, establish procedures for how school employees must respond to incidents of teen dating violence, and incorporate age appropriate education about teen dating violence and domestic violence into new or existing training programs for students in grades 7 through 12. Without funding, schools are hamstrung in their implementation of the HTRA without the necessary financial support. All the while the teens, teachers and communities continue to live with the consequences of teen dating violence.

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CONCEPT

SB 318 will take the next step towards realizing the goals of HTRA. The bill will bring much needed support to school districts and community colleges to prevent and respond to teen dating violence, domestic violence and sexual assault. Teaching our youth about healthy relationships is an important strategy for preventing acts of domestic violence and sexual assault in adulthood. Simply put, the HTRA is Oregon's long term investment for shaping healthy adult relationships.

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