

Senators,

I am writing to you because I just learned there will be a Public Hearing tomorrow on SB 1562 and I am unable to attend. I won't take too much of your time, but I want to make certain you know I strongly support any endeavor to elevate charges for the crime of strangulation - and why.

I will start by explaining that I am a Registered Nurse (22 years), Board Certified Medicolegal Death Investigator (10+ years), and college Anatomy and Physiology Adjunct Faculty. I testify as an expert witness in strangulation cases across the state and regularly present education on the topic to audiences including attorneys, law enforcement, death investigators, paramedics, nurses, and physicians.

Strangulation is a terrifying, dangerous event with no possible justification in a domestic setting. It is an act intended to overwhelm and terrify into submission, or kill. The outcomes of a strangulation event can range from immediate victim submission (on the most benign but still completely unacceptable end of the spectrum) to death. Furthermore, victims of strangulation may suffer long-term or delayed health issues as a result of strangulation and have greatly increased odds of suffering homicidal violence at the hands of the same perpetrator.

Strangulation involves restriction of air into the body or circulation to/from the brain; both of which are critical to survival. It should also be noted that the neck houses vital structures (spinal cord, large blood vessels and our airway) that are not protected by any skeletal shielding and thus are very very vulnerable to outside forces. For this reason, little pressure is required to obstruct (block) these important structures and therefore, no external injuries may be visible. A lack of visible injuries does not indicate a lack of danger, as a victim may die from strangulation without obvious external injuries.

Strangulation has been minimized by offenders (for obvious reasons), by medical professionals and investigators (due to a lack of training) and by victims (out of fear, embarrassment, lack of structural support or lack of knowledge). Please help send the message that Oregon takes strangulation very seriously. We must let perpetrators - and victims alike - know that strangulation is unacceptable.

Finally, I am certain that ongoing research will soon reveal what is already common knowledge among those intimately involved with these cases: that a significant percentage of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty are killed by men with a history of strangulation assault against intimate partners and that individuals who commit the act of strangulation are among the most dangerous of our violent offenders.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Jennifer R. Snippen RN BSN MA F-ABMDI

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<https://www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com/impact-of-strangulation-crimes/>