

To: Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Rose Bak, Director of the Domestic & Sexual Violence Coordination Office,
Multnomah County

Date: Monday, February 12, 2018

RE: Support Senate Bill 1562

Multnomah County asks for your support of Senate Bill 1562. The bill increases certain protections for people impacted by violence and expands the definition of strangulation and by reclassifying it as a felony when the victim is related to or lives with the perpetrator.

Multnomah County's Domestic and Sexual Violence Coordination Office, which is housed at the Department of County Human Services, provides supports to survivors of family violence throughout Multnomah County including survivors of strangulation. We consider survivors of strangulation to be those with the highest risks for potential homicide and have a specialized team of advocates and law enforcement officers who collaborate to provide supports to these survivors. This bill will provide needed increases in protections for families and will hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their actions.

Strangulation is a significant predictor for future lethal violence. If an abusive partner has strangled their partner in the past, the abused partner's risk of being killed in the future is 10 times higher. Strangulation is one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence: unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death within minutes. When death does not occur, strangulation can leave lasting physical impacts including brain damage, visual impairment, permanent neck and throat problems, and can cause miscarriage. Strangulation is an extremely serious crime that needs to be treated as such.

Please stand with survivors of domestic violence and help hold serious violent offenders accountable. Please vote yes on Senate Bill 1562.