



February 12, 2018

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
SB 1562: Relating to Strangulation**

Clackamas County supports SB 1562: The Board of County Commissioners supports SB 1562, which expands on the definition of the act of strangulation.

Strangulation has serious long-term health implications for survivors. Compression of the neck that impedes the flow of blood and/or oxygen to the brain has short and long-term health consequences. Even though bruising is often not immediately evident, the underlying structures of the neck may be injured, including the soft tissues of the throat, larynx, and damage to vascular tissue. These injuries may result in a stroke occurring later in life due to damaged veins and arteries limiting blood flow to and from the brain. The loss of oxygen to the brain can also result in vision changes, seizures, amnesia, and other neurological effects that impact the survivor in devastating ways. Victims fortunate enough to survive strangulation frequently succumb to unrecognized and undiagnosed injuries well after these traumatic events.

Because we understand these realities, Clackamas County is investing resources to improve our coordinated efforts toward identifying strangulation victims, responding appropriately to survivors' physical and emotional needs, improving the medical attention to non-fatal strangulation victims, and improving the prosecution of these dangerous offenders. Clackamas County is committed to the safety and security of its residents through legislation that increases resources for victims of domestic violence and improved accountability for offenders. Strangulation is a public health issue that directly affects the wellbeing of survivors, families, first responders, and the community as a whole.

Clackamas County's current domestic violence work includes supporting the collaborative work of A Safe Place Family Justice Center, extensive funding for direct services to victims and their children, participation and leadership in various domestic violence projects and initiatives, and the provision of a Domestic Violence Systems Coordinator. A multi-disciplinary team of Clackamas County professionals very recently attended the Advanced Course at the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention and will be working towards the implementation of a comprehensive response to survivors and those who perpetrate the crime of strangulation in our community.

We urge a "YES" vote for SB 1562.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.