



February 26, 2018

House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Barker and Members of the Committee,

Re: SB 1562

Children First represents the interests of Oregon's 880,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive. Effective intervention in strangulation assault will increase victim safety, hold offenders accountable for the crimes they commit, and prevent future homicides. SB 1562, making the crime of strangulation a felony is a critical step in addressing this issue.

We think it is important to remember that victims who would be protected by SB 1562 include the children and teens who are often secondary victims of domestic violence.

There are often no visible injuries with strangulation but the research overwhelmingly demonstrates that strangulation causes many non-vision injuries such as PTSD, depression, suicidal ideation, memory problems, anxiety, severe stress reaction, and amnesia and psychosis, among others, that can not only impact the direct victim, but the entire family unit.

Children can be unrecognized victims of domestic and sexual violence. Exposure alone can be traumatic. At the least, children's lives are disrupted by the abuse and what must be done in response to that abuse.

The 2016 DHS report "Striving to Meet the Need" reported a total of 7,653 secondary victims served by community-based domestic and sexual violence programs in 2016, including 6,307 children ages 12 and under and 1,346 teens.

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ABUSE/DOMESTIC/Documents/2016-Striving-to-Meet-the-Need.pdf>

Please support SB 1562 to protect women and their children.

Sincerely,
James Barta
Strategic Director