



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 20, 2023

To: Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair, [Senate Committee on Judiciary](#)

Re: [SB 974](#) – Relating to sexual assault – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes it is the role of government to ensure the health and safety of all Americans. We strongly support the provisions of SB 974, which close a gaping loophole in Oregon’s sexual assault laws. We believe that all victims of sexual assault should be heard and that those who commit sexual assault, regardless of profession, should be brought to justice.

SB 974 amends current statute by creating the crime of sexual assault by fraudulent representation. This bill has special significance for vulnerable children and teens, who may lack the agency to question the behavior of adults in positions of trust and authority. It was crafted in the aftermath of a recent case in which more than 100 women and girls reported they were sexually abused by a West Linn doctor. However, because the incidents occurred in a medical setting, and Oregon’s current criminal code is lenient when it comes to actions performed as part of a medically recognized procedure, the district attorney found it difficult to prosecute, and the grand jury failed to indict.

SB 974 provides specificity to sexual abuse statutes and removes the loophole that gives doctors and other professionals more leeway. Sexual assault by fraudulent representation will be a Class B felony, punishable by a maximum of 10 years’ imprisonment, \$250,000 fine, or both. We would like to see the statute of limitations for victims be longer than six years, since many victims need more time to process what happened to them and gain the confidence to come forward.

The League urges any and all steps toward protecting victims and ending sexual violence. We call for the passage of SB 974, and we thank you for the opportunity to present our comments.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Becky Gladstone".

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marge Easley".

Marge Easley
LWVOR Action Committee