



PRESS RELEASE

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House Votes to Extend the Statute of Limitations for Sex Crimes

HB 2317A doubles statute of limitations for certain crimes to 12 years

In a unanimous vote, the Oregon House today passed [House Bill 2317A](#), which doubles the statute of limitations for certain sexual assault crimes from six years to 12 years.

Additionally, if the victim was a minor when the offense occurred, then the statute of limitations expires at the later of 12 years from date of offense or the victim turns 30 years old.

“The more we learn about the devastating impact of sexual assault on victims, the more we understand why those victims may be unwilling or unable to report the crime right away,” said Rep. Jennifer Williamson (D-Portland), who carried the bill on the House floor. “A lack of resources for victims may also leave them without an understanding of the options they have after an assault while the current six year clock starts ticking.”

As a result, Rep. Williamson pointed out, sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes, with an average of only 39% of incidents reported to the police each year.

One case that has recently come to light shows the need for extending the statute of limitations.

In June 1998, Brenda Tracy was 24 and a single mom when four men, two of whom were Oregon State University football players, overpowered her and raped her. Fearing backlash from family, friends, and the community, Brenda never pressed any charges.

Under Oregon law, when she might have been ready to speak out, she wasn't able to seek justice. The statute of limitations expired in 2004 –six years after the alleged crime.

“This bill is about giving victims a voice and a real chance to seek justice,” said Rep. Williamson. “HB 2317 ensures that the courthouse doors won't be closed to the victims of sexual assault in the future.”

The bill goes to the Senate for consideration.

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