



OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

For Immediate Release

Friday, March 2, 2018

House Republicans unanimously support bill establishing domestic violence strangulation as a felony

Salem, Ore. - The Oregon House of Representatives today voted overwhelmingly to establish domestic violence strangulation as a felony in Oregon. Chief Sponsored by Senator Kathleen Taylor (D-Milwaukie), Representative Duane Stark (R-Grants Pass) and a host of additional lawmakers, SB 1562 makes the crime of strangulation a felony when the victim is a family member or someone who lives with the abuser.

“Domestic violence leaves a scar that goes far deeper than a physical wound,” said Rep. Stark. “Its scar can reach beyond conscious thought and invoke an existence that is consumed with fear. Especially horrifying within the spectrum of acts of domestic violence is strangulation. This is an act of betrayal, where someone close to you enters into your personal space, close enough that you can likely feel their breath and at that same time squeezes your neck so as to deprive you of the very breath that gives you life.”

In addition to strengthening penalties for strangulation of a family member, SB 1562 clarifies that a “person commits crime of strangulation if person knowingly impedes normal breathing or circulation of another person by applying pressure to chest of other person.” This language eliminates a loophole in current strangulation statutes that has allowed some abusers to evade proper punishment.

“These tormentors are creative in their quest for control,” continued Rep. Stark. “They have discovered that applying pressure to the chest can have the same life depriving paralyzing affect as hands to the throat but without leaving a mark on the neck. Unfortunately this unthinkable behavior is not deterred by our current legal consequences, which sets this offense at a mere misdemeanor.

“This bill will expand the definition of strangulation to include pressure to the chest and make strangulation a felony offense. It is designed to protect women, children and any other vulnerable person from those who would manipulate their household through this type of abuse. SB 1562 paves the way to hold abusers accountable.”

SB 1562 passed both chambers of the Oregon Legislature with unanimous support.

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