



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Senate supports removing barrier to minors reporting sexual assault**

*SB 762 provides immunity for minors possessing alcohol in certain situations*

SALEM – The Oregon Senate took action today to protect minors who report sexual assault cases where alcohol is being consumed.

Senate Bill 762 – which passed by a 29-0 vote on the Senate floor – bars evidence obtained during a sexual assault investigation from being used to arrest or prosecute minors for purchase or possession of alcohol if they are a victim or reporting the crime to emergency services or law enforcement personnel. The bill is designed to remove a crucial barrier to reporting this horrific crime.

“No one deserves to be sexually assaulted, and the presence of alcohol in a situation should not be a barrier to young people reporting an assault,” said Sen. Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis), who introduced and carried the legislation. “Survivors need access to services and support, and bystanders need to report when someone is in danger. It does not matter if you’ve had something to drink – rape is wrong every time, in every place, and the response to that crime and its victim should always take priority over a minor in possession charge.”

Oregon law prohibits individuals younger than 21 from purchasing or possessing – which includes accepting or consuming – alcohol. However, minors already are immune from prosecution if evidence of the violation came to light because the minor sought medical assistance for themselves or others due to alcohol use.

The bill expands this immunity to include when the minor reports a sexual assault crime to, or seeks assistance from, emergency medical services or law enforcement personnel. This immunity would include the victim and any minor who reports the sexual assault.

Senate Bill 762 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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