



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Bill requires advocacy support for sexual assault survivors

SB 795 requires victim advocate to be contacted when cases are identified

SALEM – Sexual assault cases are among the most emotional and physically jarring experiences a person can go through, and the Oregon Senate voted today to require greater support be provided to those survivors.

Senate Bill 795 – which passed the Senate on a 29-0 vote today – requires that law enforcement or sexual assault medical assessment providers contact a victim advocate and make reasonable efforts to ensure the advocate is available to the survivor at the medical facility where the assessment was conducted.

“Sexual assault survivors are suffering so much trauma that providing an advocate to help them navigate the legal and law enforcement process during these horrific times is simply the right thing to do,” said Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “Too many victims find these cases so gut-wrenching and difficult to participate in that they walk away and justice sometimes is never served for their attackers. This will give these survivors a support to help them navigate the legal process.”

Current Oregon law requires hospitals and other medical service providers to adopt policies for treating or referring acute sexual assault patients, when those policies are not otherwise required by law. If these facilities perform sexual assault medical assessments to collect evidence, they are required to adopt specific guidelines, employ or contract a qualified examiner for adult victims and notify a law enforcement agency within seven days after collecting a sexual assault forensic evidence kit.

SB 795 requires that the victim advocate be contacted and, if possible, be present at the medical facility where the assessment is performed. It also requires the advocate to inform the victim that the victim can decline the services of the advocate.

Senate Bill 795 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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