



# SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Screening Standards Bill for Infant Heart Defects Passes Senate** *Early Detection Critical to Ensuring Children's Health*

SALEM – A bill that will help to detect infant heart defects passed the Senate today on a bipartisan vote. Senate Bill 172 will require all newborns to be screened for congenital heart defects using pulse oximetry, an effective tool in the early detection of heart defects.

“Increasing the detection rate for heart defects is critical to supporting children’s health,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford). “By establishing this standard today, we are taking a big step to ensure that health care providers can get valuable information to identify and treat congenital heart defects before it’s too late.”

During his presentation of the bill on the Senate floor, Dr. Bates, a physician, demonstrated an example of heart screening technology.

According to an advisory committee to the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, congenital heart defects affect nearly eight out of every 1,000 births, and the hospital costs to treat these individuals totals \$2.6 billion each year. While the practice of prenatal ultrasound screening has been somewhat effective at detecting heart defects, recent studies have shown that pulse oximetry is substantially more effective. SB 172 requires Oregon’s birthing facilities to screen newborns using pulse oximetry before releasing them.

“As with so many common health problems, early detection can mean the difference between life and death,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “Implementing modern screening standards for newborns is the least we can do to make certain that our children get the care they need and can lead healthy lives.”

The bill now moves to the Oregon House of Representatives for consideration.

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