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Senate Democrats Reject Bills to Protect Child Trafficking Victims

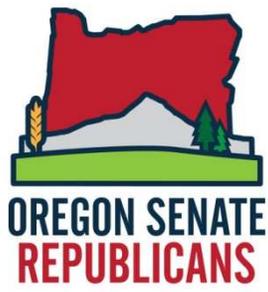
Salem, OR - Today, Senate Democrats rejected a pair of proposals to strengthen laws against child sex trafficking in Oregon. The two bills, SB 513 and SB 816, would have made patronizing a trafficked child a crime and increased the age limit for which a person engaging in child trafficking can be prosecuted.

"As the father of two daughters, I believe we must strengthen Oregon's laws against sex trafficking and protect vulnerable women and children," said Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend). "These bills would have taken necessary steps toward protecting minors trapped in trafficking schemes and ensured those who traffic children or patronize a trafficked child are fully prosecuted."

SB 513, sponsored by Senator Tim Knopp, raises the age of victims of child trafficking from 15 to 18, prevents the use of ignorance about a child's age as a defense in the prosecution of trafficking a minor, and criminalizes the advertising of trafficking activities. SB 816, sponsored by Senator Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer), adds patronizing a trafficked child to the list of human trafficking crimes.

"SB 816 protects vulnerable victims by ensuring that both those who traffic children and those who patronize a trafficked child are prosecuted while enhancing the defense of child trafficking victims," said Senator Thatcher. "Under the bill, those who knowingly allowed a child to be trafficked would be prosecuted. Our children need stronger protections against those who facilitate and profit from their abuse. I am sad we couldn't extend greater protections to these kids today."

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