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OREGON SENATE REPUBLICANS

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2021

Contact: Dru Draper

dru.draper@oregonlegislature.gov

Republican Sex Crime Prevention Legislation Clears Senate

SALEM, Ore. – Today the Senate approved both [SB 515](#) and [SB 535](#) with overwhelming bipartisan support. The measures add more reporting opportunities to help prevent sex crimes in public spaces where traffickers frequent.

Senate Bill 515 requires employees of bars and restaurants to report reasonable belief of suspected human trafficking or unlawful employment of minors.

Senate Bill 535 adds hotel workers to the list of mandatory reporters and requires the immediate reporting of suspected child pornography by computer technicians or processors.

“Republicans are committed to standing up for victims this session,” Senator Fred Girod, chief sponsor of the legislation and Senate Republican Leader, said. “That requires us to give law enforcement the tools to prevent and stop heinous crimes in real-time. SB 515 and 535 also empower our communities to report and stop these crimes. By all of us taking a little responsibility for the most vulnerable in our communities, we can make a difference.”

Traffickers specialize in keeping victims out of sight by constantly moving around but interact with workers in at hotels and bars. This legislation empowers those workers to be vigilant and partner with law enforcement to save lives.

The United States Department of Defense has identified human trafficking as the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the United States. Portland has been identified as a hotbed of trafficking, with nearly 750 victims from 2018–2019.

“Trafficking and sex crimes are happening in our own backyard, and we need more tools to fight them,” Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend). “It’s not just Portland. Traffickers use public spaces, like bars, restaurants, and hotels, up and down I-5 and other routes to hide. These employees can play an important role in reporting.”

“Amid unbelievable rising crime rates across Oregon, advocating for public safety and victims’ rights must be among the Legislature’s top priorities,” Senator Lynn Findley (R-Vale) added. “Sexual exploitation crimes often go unreported and victims don’t have the resources they need to find help. The more reporting the community does, the better.”

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