



# SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Senate votes to protect persons with disabilities from criminal intimidation** *SB 398 adds “disability” to list of groups already protected*

SALEM – The Oregon Senate voted this morning to support vulnerable Oregonians by passing Senate Bill 398, legislation that adds “disability” to the list of classes that are protected from intimidation under state law. Protected classes from intimidation include a person’s race, color, religion, sexual orientation, or national religion. “Disability” would be added to that list under SB 398.

“This bill will ensure that vulnerable Oregonians have greater protection if they are attacked because of their disability,” said Senator Suzanne Bonamici (D-NW Portland/Washington Co.), who carried the bill on the floor.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, people with disabilities experience a rate of violent crime one and a half times higher than persons without disabilities. For sexual crimes, that rate of victimization is twice as high as the general population. Advocates believe that people with disabilities are sometimes unable or afraid to report crimes against them, and these numbers could actually be understated.

“Crimes against people with disabilities are commonly underreported,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “Disability is already included as a basis for protection in Federal hate crime laws. SB 398 will make Oregon’s law consistent, give vulnerable Oregonians greater protection, and impose greater punishment on those that commit crimes against another person because they are disabled.”

The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

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*For more information on the Senate Majority Caucus, please visit [orsenatemajority.org](http://orsenatemajority.org)*