

CRIME VICTIMS UNITED

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Mr. Jeff Merkley
Speaker of the House
Oregon House of Representatives
2326 NW Lovejoy
Portland, OR 97296

July 2, 2008

Dear Speaker Merkley:

I am writing today because I was appalled by the press release you issued yesterday attacking Senator Gordon Smith's crime record, and touting your own record and plan to "protect children and families from violent crime."

I cannot believe that you would have the audacity to criticize anyone when it comes to the safety of Oregon families and children. On issue after issue you have failed to protect Oregonians from sex offenders, rapists, and child predators. Your comments are disingenuously hypocritical.

When I look back over the last decade of your service in the state legislature, I find numerous instances where you voted against protecting crime victims and keeping our families safe. In case you've forgotten, here are a few highlights from your record on crime as a legislator.

- You were one of a handful of legislators who opposed extending the statute of limitations for sex crimes, including rape, incest and sex abuse of a child. (HB 2316) (2005)
- You were the only member of the legislature to oppose a bill establishing tough new penalties for assaulting an infant. (HB 2307) (1999)
- As Speaker, you blocked legislation to create the crime of sexual servitude of a minor. (HB 3553) (2007)
- As Speaker you blocked legislation to prevent paroled sex offenders from residing in communities without 24/7 police coverage. (HB 2861) (2007)
- As Speaker you failed to fund 24/7 police coverage of the I-5 corridor needed to help combat Meth Trafficking.
- You were one of only 15 House members to oppose tougher sentences for violent, gang related crimes. (HB 2313) (2005)

In addition to your horrendous voting record on law enforcement issues, you have also stated your opposition to Measure 11, one of the most important tools in protecting victims of violent crimes and in delivering justice to those who commit them. You have opposed the interest of law enforcement at nearly every corner for the last decade and for you to champion your own work in this area is nothing short of a disgrace.

"To promote a balanced criminal justice system through public awareness and legislative action"

Senator Smith has spent his career both in the State Senate and the United States Senate working in the interest of law enforcement, helping to rid our communities of crime. As a state Senator he supported mandatory sentences for violent criminals and worked with then Attorney General Ted Kulongoski to push the bi-partisan efforts of the Juvenile Justice Task Force to address violent youth crime in Oregon. How do I know? I was in Salem working closely with Senator Smith.

As a United States Senator he has continued to champion the needs of law enforcement by supporting hundreds of millions of dollars for law enforcement, authoring legislation with Senator Wyden to fund the clean-up of former meth labs and working to protect victims of violent crimes. Gordon Smith has a long and consistent record of working to protect our community and I am proud to support him.

Your attack on Senator Smith on the issue of crime rings hollow when you have such a poor record yourself. Oregon families deserve to know the truth about your record, and I intend to ensure they do.

With great concern,

Steve Doell
President