



To:

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Judiciary

Subject:

SB 347 Modifies crime applicable to possession of firearm, or instrument used as dangerous weapon, while in or on school grounds.

April 5, 2013

Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

I am a general pediatrician at Oregon Health & Science University and I am a parent of two teenagers who attend public schools in Portland. I would like to express my personal strong support and the support of Oregon Pediatric Society, for SB 347. We feel that this legislation is a critical step to make Oregon schools safer for children. Gun injuries cause twice as many deaths in children and young adults as cancer, 5 times as many as heart disease, 15 times as many as infection.

Those of us who work with children, and those of us who are parents know that if a child sees an unattended gun, there is a chance that he will pick it up and point it at someone. You may remember reading about Amina Bowman, an 8 year old girl who was shot in the abdomen last year in her classroom in Bremerton, Washington by a 9 year old student. You may have read about Austin Stokes, 12, of Oregon City, who was shot in the head by his 13 year old friend two years ago. The two boys were playing with a gun they found and didn't realize that it was loaded.

Many of us who are parents may recall a time that we unintentionally left something potentially hazardous in the reach of a child. Derek Carlile, a police officer in Marysville, Washington, usually strapped his revolver to his ankle, but one year ago, he left it in his van in the cubby under the dash, behind his wife's purse. His young son found it and shot his 7 year old sister Jenna in the chest. She died the next day. That same month in Tacoma, Julio Segura-McIntosh, 3 years old, shot and killed himself when his parents left a loaded gun under the seat of the car when they stopped for gas. Accidents happen.

Just four months ago in Tillamook, Gary Quackenbush attended a showing of the Hobbit. The next day, Kolton McKinney and Levi Crabtree, both 12, went to that

same theater with their 7th grade class. Kolton opened his seat up, and a loaded Beretta 9mm semi-automatic, safety off, fell to the floor. The gun had fallen out of Mr. Quackenbush's pocket the night before. He carried the gun so that he could protect everyone in case a killer walked into the theater. Kolton turned the gun in, averting a tragedy in this case.

Imagine that a parent volunteers at your child's school and her gun falls out of her handbag. Imagine that a teacher keeps a gun in his desk for protection, and he forgets to lock the desk drawer. As these heartbreaking stories tell, it is not farfetched to imagine that a child may find the gun and hurt himself or someone else.

In addition to the risk of accidental death or injury, there is the risk of intentional injury. Currently, a disgruntled parent may bring his legally obtained firearm with conceal and carry permit into any Oregon school. Existing law doesn't allow anyone to do anything about it unless he fires, or threatens to fire.

Those who know the public health data understand that allowing guns in schools increases the likelihood of tragic death or injury. As pediatricians, we ask that you remove the exception from Oregon law that allows individuals with a permit to bring a gun onto school grounds. For primary care pediatricians, prevention is our core work. We aim to protect children from all things that can harm them. If you pass this bill, you will help us do that.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I would welcome any questions you may have.

Melissa Weddle, MD, MPH
Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics
Oregon Health & Science University



Amina Bowman, 9
Shot in abdomen at school by 8 year old classmate
February 22, 2012, Bremerton, Washington
Survived



Austin Stokes, 12
Shot in head by 13 year old friend
January 30, 2011, Oregon City, Oregon
Survived



Jenna Carlile, 7
Shot in chest by brother
March 10, 2012, Marysville, Washington
Died



Julio Segura McIntosh
Shot self with gun left in car
March 14, 2012, Tacoma, Washington
Died