From:	Susan Beal
To:	DeJong Annola
Subject:	Written Testimony in Favor of Senate Bills 347 and 700
Date:	Thursday, April 04, 2013 1:49:54 PM

Dear Chair Prozanski and Committee Members,

My name is Susan Beal and I am the mother of two young children in Portland. I'm respectfully asking for your support for safer gun laws in Oregon, particularly Senate Bills 700 and 347. I hope these are just the first of many common-sense efforts regulating firearms as sensibly as other potentially dangerous products, like automobiles or prescription narcotics. Used correctly and governed by sensible laws, these are all useful tools. But in careless or destructive hands, they can and do kill many people. Two of these are well regulated, and one is not.

I simply ask for firearms to be covered by the same type of common-sense laws that govern cars and driving: someone who wants to own and drive a car must pass a basic skills test, show legal identification, get insurance, register the car when it's bought, and drive it safely so no one is hurt or killed. These basic measures do not restrict anyone's rights and hugely improve public safety. So should it be with guns.

My daughter starts kindergarten this fall and I appreciate SB 347 keeping guns out of her, and every other Oregon, public school. We all know the armed-hero/good-guy storyline of the movies, but it is largely fictional; the possibility of children being hurt or killed by guns in their midst is horribly real. Our public schools are underfunded and struggling. In an era where too many teachers are laid off and class sizes are bursting at the seams, our precious education dollars should not go to armed security guards. There were security guards at Virginia Tech and at Columbine. Our well-trained local police forces, funded through public safety instead of at the expense of our education budget, must be the line of defense if an attack happens.

I am also strongly in favor of SB 700 regulating gun sales the same way in all venues. Guns are far too easy to get when they change hands for cash at gun shows. They cheapen human life and they cost us all far too much. Common-sense regulations on firearms that simply regulate the ways they are bought, and hopefully then are more carefully used and stored, do not infringe on anyone's rights, and they will save countless lives.

I would like to borrow someone else's words to finish this letter, who said what I couldn't. Marilyn Sewell of Portland wrote this week:

"It is true that we cannot prevent every drug-related shootout, every murder of a woman by the man who "owns her," every suicide, every mass killing that is carried out with a gun. But when guns are so easily accessible, and so many deaths are occurring, we have to start somewhere. How can we shift consciousness in a violent and gun-saturated culture? Cultural change takes time, but we can begin with the rule of law, the way we ended slavery, the way we gave women the right to vote, the way we integrated public schools. Let sensible laws lead the way. Changes in consciousness will follow."

Respectfully yours,
Susan Beal

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