

I am writing today in support of SB 347, SB 699, SB 700 and SB 796. I am also writing as a survivor of the CTC shooting on December 11, 2012.

My wife, Olivia and I were enjoying a cup of coffee in the food court at CTC when Jacob Roberts opened fire, just 30-40 feet from us. Cindy Yuille was just to our right when she was killed. Steven Forsyth was killed just to our left. A bullet shattered the glass side of the escalator that we were sitting next to. Our lives were spared because there was a Christmas tree between us and the shooter so we were out of his line of sight.

We escaped that day physically unharmed, but are still dealing from the trauma of being in the line of fire. I want to first correct the record about events of that day that were given by opponents of these 4 bills. Jacob Roberts did NOT stop firing because he was confronted by the young man who also had a weapon. He stopped firing because the stolen gun that he was using jammed. As evidence, I cite the Oregonian interview of the young man. I am very thankful that he chose not to fire his weapon.

As someone who has lived through live fire, I know that the very LAST thing that is needed is more shooters, unless they are trained law officers. We entrust that responsibility to them and we INSIST that they be intensely trained and recurrently trained. They do a great job and even they occasionally make mistakes. If you have not been under fire, you cannot understand how chaotic things are, how fast everything happens, and how you become so intensely focused on survival.

I intimately know the sounds, the smells and the absolute terror of gun violence. Unfortunately, too many families in the United States and in Oregon know them as well. The United States has the greatest incidence of gun violence in the developed world. We are, unfortunately, far ahead of every other developed country. The record is very clear on the connection between the presence of guns and gun violence. More guns equals more violence. Period.

These four bills represent a balanced and reasonable step in reducing the number of guns in Oregon that are in the wrong hands and gun violence in public places. They do NOT violate anyone's second amendment rights as they are recently interpreted by the US Supreme Court.

A vast majority of Oregonians support universal background checks as represented by SB 700. Of course this will not solve the problem of gun violence, but it is an important step in the direction of lessening it. If we wait for perfection, we will never act.

Guns have no place in either our public schools or our public buildings. Guns do NOT make any place, including homes, safer. All the evidence is that they make violence more likely. SB347 and SB699 are important steps in making our schools and public buildings safer.

SB796 toughens requirements to obtain a Concealed Handgun License. It is hard for me to imagine why someone would want to carry a weapon that they could not demonstrate proficiency with. This bill is an important step toward insuring that these weapons are used with less danger of collateral damage.

You have a tough job ahead. There are people of good heart and mind on both sides. These bills represent a balanced, reasoned and appropriate response to today's world. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to make these changes. Change is needed because our current laws and policies are simply not working.

Thank you for this opportunity.

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