

Dundee Mayor Ted Crawford
Written Testimony Before the Senate Judiciary Committee 4/5/13
In Support of Universal Background Checks (SB 700)

Chair Prozanski, members of the Committee. My name is Ted Crawford and I am the mayor of Dundee, Oregon. We are a small community of about 3,000 people in Yamhill County. But even our small community has been touched by the pain of gun violence.

On an early morning in late July 2010, one of our quiet residential neighborhoods was rocked by gunshots when convicted criminal Jonathan Hayden Williams shot and killed Timothy Craig Long in a confrontation during a drug deal. Williams later pled guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The next year, on July 4, 2011, Randall Engels took the life of his estranged wife, Amy Engels, and their two children before ending his own life. Amy had twice applied for a protective order, but had been denied due to insufficient evidence. If that order had been in place, Mr. Engels would have failed a background check when he purchased a .357 revolver in June 2011 at a Woodburn gun dealer. But under current law, he would not have been required to undergo a background check at

all – regardless of a protective order – if he had bought a gun from a private party.

Let me be clear: I am not suggesting that the bills under consideration would have stopped those incidents of gun violence from occurring. But I do believe that the universal background checks proposal contained in Senate Bill 700 are an important step to reducing gun violence in my community and across this state.

Preventing gun violence, like most social problems will take a balanced approach including several elements: better mental health and domestic abuse services, more support for community corrections and post-prison supervision, treatment for drug and alcohol addition, and effective law that stop dangerous individuals from accessing firearms.

Restricting access for those with a history of domestic violence or subject to a restraining order will make our communities safer.

Evidence shows that in states that require a background check for private handgun sales, 38 percent fewer women are shot to death by their partners.

Universal background checks also work to curb straw purchases and other means that criminals use to illegally obtain guns. In cities where a background check is required for private handgun sales, there is 48 percent less intrastate gun trafficking, as measured by the share of guns recovered at crime scenes within two years of their original sale.

I encourage you today to support Senate Bill 700 as one important step we can take to reduce gun violence. There are a number of other important steps we can take along that path, but ensuring every time a gun is purchased it isn't falling into the wrong hands is a critical one.

I thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions that Committee may have.

Ted Crawford

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