

May 1, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Representative Chris Garrett, Chair
Members of the House Committee on Rules

Dear Chair and members of the House Committee on Rule,

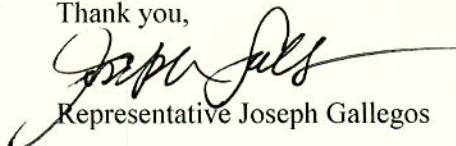
Thank you very much for allowing us to tell the story of a young mother and her child. For the record, my name is Joseph Gallegos. I represent House District 30, which includes the Cities of Hillsboro and North Plains, and some unincorporated Washington County. I bring before you House Bill 3500, a bill that would require washing machines in Oregon to have warning labels to not allow children near or on top of washing machines. Colleagues, if we can prevent the death of one more child, then as stewards of our citizens, we have done our job. Tiffany Hebb is my constituent. She contacted our offices with a story that even brought tears to the staffer who took the call. The Huffington post describes this tale:

“At 21 months, Ollie Hebb was his mother's helper on laundry day, climbing atop a bin so he could toss clothes into a top-loading washer. On the morning he went missing for a few minutes, Tiffany Hebb went through her house calling for him but got no answer. She found the toddler in the washing machine, submerged in a full tub. He died a day later. His mother, recently moved to Oregon from Utah, says she never thought the washing machine would be a danger to her child and is telling the story to make parents aware of the danger.”

The same Huffington Post article also reported that five children had died in the same matter between 2005 and 2009. It hurts my heart to tell you that Ollie, a young constituent of mine, makes that number increases to six. Another report done in 2003 by the Consumer Product Safety Commission cited 496 washing machine related injuries to children. Now, Tiffany and her husband Chris are on a mission to educate parents about the dangers of the seemingly innocuous household appliance. To do that, they turned to us, their State Representative, with an idea that could save the lives of future children. This bill was initiated by my Republican predecessor, the good Representative Shawn Lindsay from the Silicon Valley. I am proud to continue that work and bring this bill to you.

Colleagues, there is nothing so tragic than losing a child. I, myself, have lost two babies who never had the chance to grow up even into childhood. We regularly pass resolutions that honor our heroes. We will never know if little Ollie might not have grown up to be one of these heroes. Colleagues, I know that no matter what we do today, young people will still continue to commit suicide, people will continue drink themselves to death, and spouses will continue to batter their partners. But today, we have the opportunity to start a conversation on a measure that could prevent the death of another child in a washing machine accident. Colleagues, I ask you to look inside of your hearts today, and support House Bill 3500 with work session and a do-pass recommendation.

Thank you,



Representative Joseph Gallegos