



February 5, 2014

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

According to the handout “Background Checks Keep Guns Out of the Hands of Abusers,” distributed by the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Gun Violence, 207 Oregonians were killed in domestic violence incidents between the years 2003 and 2010. This figure, provided by the Oregon Health Authority, reflects only fatal violence between intimate partners, known as IPV. While IPV comprises a significant percentage of domestic violence, the state of Oregon, and the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, for which I work, have adopted a much broader definition of domestic violence that encompasses violence committed by family or household members (see ORS 135.230). With this in mind, it becomes clear that 207 deaths in seven years is simply too low of a number to reflect the toll of domestic violence. 207 Oregonians engaged in intimate relationships were killed between 2003 and 2010, but in the past two years alone, 89 Oregonians—women, men, and children—were killed during the course of domestic violence incidents. 54 of these individuals, or 61%, died by gunshot.

Data from 2009 through 2013 collected by the Oregon Coalition and the Multnomah County Domestic Violence Coordinator’s Office indicate that the percentage of deaths by gunshot has largely held steady, with a spike in 2009.

In 2009, 36 out of 46 people who died during a domestic violence incident, or 78%, died by gunshot.

In 2010, 43 of 71 deaths, or 61%, resulted from gunshot, and in 2011, 19 of 32 deaths, or 59%, resulted from gunshot.

The total for the past five years, 2009-2013, is 152 fatalities from gunshot, or 64% of 238 total deaths.

In an effort to reduce the horrific number of deaths resulting from the use of guns, and the number of women, men, and children whose lives are cut short each year, the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence supports the passage of Senate Bill 1551.

Respectfully,

Chloe Massarello, Research and Publications Program Coordinator

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