



Wednesday, February 5, 2014

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

Chair Prozanski & Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence advocates for the nearly 50 community-based, non-profit shelters, crisis lines and safety planning service centers that support victims of domestic and sexual violence. We provide these programs across the state of Oregon with technical assistance, trainings, resources and advocacy. *We strive to give hard earned support to those in and around your district who are doing the critical work of assisting your constituents through their most frightening experiences.*

In turn, these programs from throughout Oregon - including Tribal Communities - provide the legal, medical and personal advocacy needed to help victims of domestic and sexual violence to become survivors. As the advocate of the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, I am testifying today to draw attention to the impact that firearms in domestic and sexual violence have on the health of our entire state.

Where Federal laws that are intended to prevent access to firearms by abusers have their limitations, many states have acted to fill in these gaps, to close these loopholes. Background Checks for private sales prevents many domestic abusers from obtaining the very firearms they use to further victimize their partners. In fact, in those states that require a background check for every handgun sale, 38% fewer women are shot to death.¹

An analysis of female domestic homicides (a woman murdered by a spouse, intimate acquaintance, or close relative) showed that prior domestic violence in the household made a woman *14.6 times* more likely to be killed. This same study shows that having one or more

¹ Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *Gun Laws and Violence Against Women*, at http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/9/e9/e/1726/Gun_Laws_and_Violence_Against_Women.pdf. [↔]

guns in the home made a woman 7.2 times more likely, to be the victim of such a homicide.² And as the FBI notes, a conviction for a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence represents the second-most frequent reason for denial of an application to purchase a firearm after a felony conviction.³ In light of this, we believe that SB 1551 is the right step to take for Oregonians.

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence strongly urges this body to send SB 1551 over to the House of Representatives. It is imperative that Oregon closes this private sales loophole and continues to protect victims of escalating violence across the state.

Prepared on behalf of the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence by Niki Terzieff

² http://www.vpc.org/fact_sht/domviofs.htm

³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Federal Denials, November 30, 1998 – August 31, 2013," available at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/nics/reports/federal-denials-033113.pdf>. [↩]