

## **WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 1551**

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Herman Welch and I presently live on the Central Oregon Coast in Waldport, where I am proud to have served as a two term mayor of my community. I am a native of Oregon and a registered voter in Lincoln County Oregon. Today I am speaking in support of Senate Bill 1551 that will require criminal and mental background checks on the sale of guns through internet sources, and for the personal sale of guns in order to close the significant loophole that now exists in Oregon law.

As a senior who is celebrating his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, I believe that I can speak for most seniors in Oregon in saying that we would like to feel more secure and safe from gun violence as we continue to go about our community activities, particularly as we enjoy our shopping areas and movie theatres. Senate Bill 1551, if passed, will help protect our communities and those of us in our later years that still enjoy getting out and being active.

I am also a gun owner, and when I purchased my gun 20 years ago when residing in California I underwent a State of California background check prior to my being able to take possession, and I felt that this was clearly a reasonable and appropriate part of being a gun owner that provided greater safety for me and everyone in the community. I still very firmly believe that is true, and I am today even a stronger advocate of state criminal and mental background checks for all gun purchases in Oregon.

Last year our present Oregon law for background checking on gun purchases from licensed dealers and retail stores stopped the sale of 2,378 guns to unsafe purchasers, and that is a significant accomplishment. At the same time you don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to surmise that many of these 2,378 rejected gun purchasers simply directed their efforts to making internet gun purchases or buying guns out of the trunk of cars from persons selling on a private basis with no questions asked. Senate Bill 1551 would clearly help to close the loopholes in Oregon law for the Internet and private sale of guns that are a clear and present danger to all of our communities.

I respectfully urge this committee to provide a Yes Vote to bring Senate Bill 1551 out of the Judiciary Committee for a full vote by the Oregon State Senate this session. I thank you for being willing to read and listen to my thoughts on this urgent issue.

Respectfully Yours,

Herman Welch,  
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