

Chair Prozanski and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Geri Berg and I am a retired pediatric social worker, a current CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) in Multnomah County, a mother of four, and a resident of NW Portland.

I am writing in favor of SB 1551 and expanded background checks in Oregon for the purchase of a firearm.

It's a small and modest step to close a loophole on gun sales, but one that the majority of Oregonians approve.

Gun sales over the internet go unchecked as do many face to face sales, making it easier for someone to quickly, and often illegally obtain a gun.

SB 1551 to expand background checks for gun sales just makes sense to most Oregonians, gun owners and non gun owners alike.

We need our elected officials to reflect the majority opinion on expanded background checks. Let's move SB 1551 forward and be proud of the State of Oregon for doing the right and sensible thing.

Sincerely,
Geri Berg,MSW
Portland, Oregon

P.S. Everyone has a story. Mine involves a young woman, a friend of one of my sons, who has been a preschool teacher in downtown Portland for eight years.

She was awakened every night for months following the Sandy Hook shootings with the nightmare of not being able to find enough "cupboards and drawers" for her little students with an Adam Lanza person outside her classroom door.

I don't want to live in this kind of community fear, and I certainly don't want our children to live this way either.

It is a public health matter; and both a moral and a common sense issue to prevent these situations.

SB 1551 is one small step in that direction.

"Everything is impossible
until it's done."

Nelson Mandela

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee

Our names are Lisa Brenner and Tom Stibolt We currently live at 3816 NE Glisan, Portland, OR 97232

Given that a large majority of Oregon residents support closing the private gun sale loophole, we ask you to represent the citizens of Oregon and pass this bill. We heard the Multnomah County Sheriff relay the support that Oregon Sheriffs have for this bill. We want to keep our law enforcement officers safer by slowing the trade in illegal guns. In addition this bill would slow both domestic abusers and potential suicides from quickly obtaining guns. Last, it's time to shut down the growing internet marketplace for guns.

We had to leave our country home and move into Portland because of neighbors who stockpiled guns and befriended convicted criminals. It's time to stop the bullies.

Chair Prozanski and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Alice Callicott. I am a Certified PA and retired RN, mother of two and a constituent in Senator Prozanski's district.

I am writing in favor of SB 1551 and expanded background checks for the purchase of firearms in Oregon.

It's a small and very modest step to close a loophole on gun sales, but one that the majority (74% !) of Oregonians approve.

Gun sales over the internet go unchecked as do many face to face sales, making it easier for someone to quickly, and often illegally obtain a gun, making more probable national tragedies as well as the all too many everyday gunshot tragedies that I've seen as a P.A. and RN.

SB 1551 to expand background checks for gun sales just makes sense to most Oregonians, gun owners and non gun owner's alike.

We need our elected officials to reflect the majority opinion on expanded background checks. Let's move SB1551 forward and be proud of the State of Oregon for doing the right and sensible thing.

Sincerely,

Alice Callicott, RN, PA
Eugene, OR

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Rebecca Cohen, and I live in Portland.

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1551, which would expand background checks on gun purchases in Oregon.

I feel strongly about this issue because sadly, like many families, my family has seen gun violence up close.

We are approaching the 30th anniversary of the day - May 3, 1984 - that my uncle Alan Cohen was shot and killed by a disgruntled employee. Gun violence tears families apart. If expanded background checks stop even a fraction of gun deaths in Oregon, then we will spare scores of Oregonians the grief of losing a loved one.

I am also the mother of an 8 year old in Portland Public Schools. My daughter had to endure a lockdown - not a drill - when a drive-by shooting happened in the middle of a summer afternoon at Peninsula Park in North Portland, where she was attending a day camp. I arrived to pick her up, only to find the park cordoned off behind police tape, surrounded by law enforcement, news vans and helicopters. I had to wait outside the community center with all of the other parents before our kids were escorted out holding hands in a line, just like in those infamous photos after the Sandy Hook shooting. Thank goodness nobody was hurt, but parents, kids and communities should not have to accept this as our 'reality.' Chances are, the gun used in that shooting was obtained without a background check.

Finally, I designed the attached graphics that you may see circulating around the capitol as this bill is being debated. In the process of designing them, I became very familiar with the statistics surrounding background checks. I feel strongly that expanding background checks will increase public safety for women, children, law enforcement, and all average citizens. Our right to be free from fear and violence is certainly worth a few extra minutes of a gun-buyer's time.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Cohen
Portland



In Memory of Alan I. Cohen

Beloved father, uncle, brother, son, husband.

Born: February 6, 1935

Murdered by gun: May 3, 1984

BACKGROUND CHECKS KEEP GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF CRIMINALS

OREGON 2012:

Background checks
stopped the sale of

2,378 GUNS

to individuals with
a criminal record.¹

Not at a licensed dealer or a gun show?
NO BACKGROUND CHECK IS REQUIRED

EASY
for criminals
**TO BUY
GUNS
ONLINE**

or through classified ads.

CLOSING THE LOOPHOLE WILL REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

After Missouri repealed universal background checks in 2007:

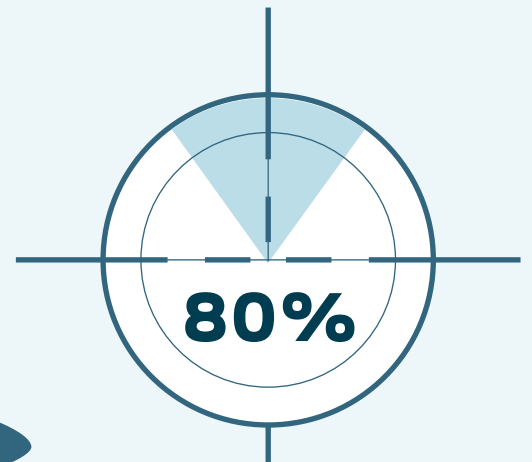


GUN MURDER
RATES ROSE
25%⁴

In states with
background checks on
ALL handgun sales,

39%
FEWER

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS
ARE SHOT TO DEATH.³



of inmates
GOT THEIR HANDGUN FROM AN
UNLICENSED PRIVATE SELLER.²

IT'S TIME TO **CLOSE OREGON'S BACKGROUND CHECKS LOOPHOLE**
AND KEEP GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF CRIMINALS.

PLEASE VOTE **YES** ON **SENATE BILL 1551**

OREGON ALLIANCE
TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE



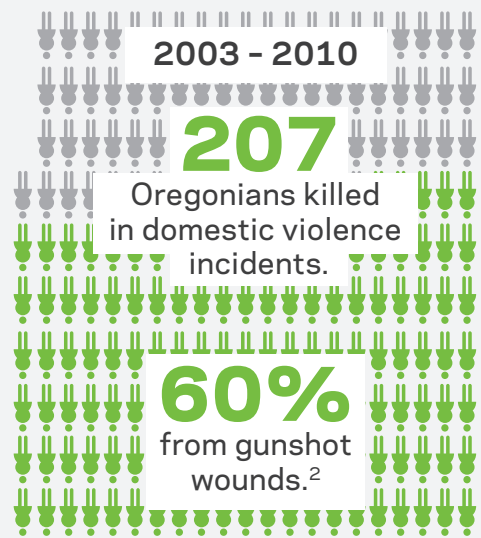
¹. Oregonian, January 10, 2014. ². State prison inmates convicted of handgun crimes. - Daniel Webster, Director of Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, Senate testimony 2/12/13. ³. FBI data from 2001-2011. ⁴. Data from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

BACKGROUND CHECKS KEEP GUNS

OUT OF THE HANDS OF DOMESTIC ABUSERS



1 in **10** women has been physically or sexually assaulted by a partner in the last 5 years.¹



Convicted of domestic abuse or under a restraining order in OR?



NO GUNS FOR YOU.

IN 2013

OREGON BACKGROUND CHECKS

STOPPED

80

firearm sales due to DV conviction³

50

firearm sales due to restraining order³

Oregon's background check system only covers guns sold by licensed dealers or at a gun show.



Abusers are able to **BUY GUNS ONLINE** or through classified ads **WITHOUT A BACKGROUND CHECK.**

CLOSING THE LOOPHOLE WILL **SAVE WOMEN'S LIVES**

States requiring a background check on all sales have



STATES WITHOUT UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS



STATES WITH UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

38%
FEWER

domestic violence firearm homicides.⁴

IT'S TIME TO **CLOSE OREGON'S BACKGROUND CHECKS LOOPHOLE** AND KEEP GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF DOMESTIC ABUSERS.

PLEASE VOTE **YES** ON **SENATE BILL 1551**

OREGON ALLIANCE TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE 

1. Oregon Public Health Division, December 2010 2. Oregon Public Health Division, 2012 3. Oregon State Police, Preliminary 2013 data obtained on January 2, 2014 4. FBI Supplementary Homicide Report and Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2010

Chair Pozanski, members of the committee:

The Oregonian newspaper's editorial board claimed recently that the bill introduced by Senator Prozabski "would be of no consequence" and that he is "playing a little gun fun" and "playing politics."

The National Rifle Association (NRA) obviously does *not* share the newspaper's view. A post card received last week (1/27/2014 - 2/1/2014) by all NRA members in Oregon - of which I am one - from the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, Fairfax, VA:

".....your Second Amendment rights are....under attack! Legislation that would criminalize the lawful private transfer of firearms will soon be introduced as Senate Bill 1551. This dangerous legislation will have an adverse impact on law-abiding citizens while criminals will simply circumvent and ignore the law."

This from the NRA seems to underscore the fact that Oregon's gun laws need strengthening and that SB 155 is a step in the right direction.

I STRONGLY urge your SUPPORT of SB 1551.

George Collins, 3433 NE Avery, Newport, OR 97365

Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I would like to remind our legislators that doing nothing is also a decision.....without having to own it. Our representatives must let us know where they stand on the issue of universal background checks. Any legislator advocating for transparency and who is not working to make sure a bill, supported by over 80% of Oregonians, is allowed to be voted on is disingenuous at best and is willing to accept the collateral damage from gun violence to 'protect' the right of convicted felons and unstable persons to deal with the world holding and using a gun. If a legislator sincerely believes the daily victims are a necessary price to pay for 'the right to bear arms,' let them be brave enough to vote their values.

Gail Cordell

Oregon City, OR

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee,

My name is Tim Counihan and I live in Hood River, OR. I am very much in support of Senate Bill 1551. The very least that we can do to protect our families is to ensure that we make progress towards:

- Shutting down growing internet gun marketplaces;
- Closing the loophole that makes it simple for criminals to get a gun;
- Keeping our law enforcement officers safer by slowing the trade in illegal guns;
- Protecting domestic abuse victims by preventing abusers from quickly obtaining guns.

Please do what you can to protect us from gun violence by supporting Senate Bill 1551.

Thank you,
Tim Counihan
418 May Street
Hood River, OR 97031

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

My name is Julie Crosse, I live in outer SE Portland and am a mother and an RN. My best friend was shot in the head at the age of 19 by a drug addict with a gun obtained from a private sale. I am asking for your support of sb1551 in the interest of public safety. Please help to close the loophole that allows legal sales of guns to criminals that endanger our community, our children, and in particular, women. It is unacceptable that after all the recent gun violence, we as a community have still not closed this dangerous loophole. Keep in mind that passing this bill does not in any way violate the 2nd amendment, and to allow the gun lobby to manipulate our politicians any longer is simply unforgivable. While this certainly will not stop gun violence entirely, it is a small step in the right direction. Let your conscience guide you to the only ethical, moral decision; to pass this bill now. Do not continue to be part of the problem for another day, be part of the solution.

Thank you,

Julie Crosse, BSN, RN, mother

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Anneliese Davis. I am a Portland resident living in the Sellwood neighborhood, and I am asking this committee to support Senate Bill 1551 and close the background check loophole.

I believe we all can agree that there are certain people who should not be allowed to have guns. Criminals (including domestic abusers) and people whose mental illness makes them a danger to themselves and others should not be allowed to arm themselves. Background checks are an effective screening mechanism that both deter dangerous people from attempting to acquire firearms and prevent them from purchasing them from legitimate sources.

If a person is considered enough of a danger that he or she is prevented from purchasing a gun in a store or at a gun show by a background check, then why on earth should that person be able to simply go online and purchase their firearm? This loophole is a threat to all of us, but it is especially a threat to law enforcement and to victims of domestic abuse.

As a mother and someone who has worked with survivors of domestic violence, I urge this committee to support SB 1551. Please help us make our community safer.

Respectfully,
Anneliese Davis
922 SE Lexington St.
Portland, OR 97202

Feb. 6, 2014

Senate Judicial Committee hearing, SB 1551.

Thoughts in favor of SB 1551.

My name is Doug Davis, and I am a resident and small business owner in rural Marion County. I am a gun owner, and I am here today to speak in favor of SB 1551

The bill before this committee is a real opportunity to enhance and strengthen the safety and security of all Oregonians, of those men and women who voted for you to do this hard job for their families and children, and for our grandchildren.

I do not believe, nor have I heard any compelling argument or testimony, that the provisions of SB 1551 erode or diminish my constitutional rights, nor the rights of any Oregonian to legally and responsibly own a gun or firearm.

Communities within our state and across our nation are pleading with their lawmakers to take clear and decisive steps to make our neighborhoods, churches, and schools safer and more secure. Our voices are strong and clear, our objective is simple. We plead with you to listen, and do the right thing.

Act in favor of SB 1551.

From: John DeJarnatt, 2358 Ptarmigan St NW, Salem, OR 97304

I am writing to encourage passage of SB 1551. As a retired teacher and coach, I am very concerned about the safety of the children of Oregon. Requiring background checks on all gun sales as outlined in this bill is a step towards improving the safety of these children and their families. There have been too many senseless tragedies caused by unrestricted access to guns.

Until we get realistic about background checks for all gun purchases, these tragedies are going to continue to happen. Background checks do not impinge on 2nd Amendment rights. While not a guarantee, background checks will help keep guns out of the hands of nut cases who shoot up schools and malls. You need a license to get married, to drive a car, to go fishing, to own a dog, etc. Why not a background check to own a gun? While it won't solve the whole complex issue of gun-related deaths, it will help keep dangerous weapons away from dangerous people like convicted felons, domestic abusers, and the violently mentally ill. Ultimately, I believe making sure the person who purchases a gun understands the proper use of, the dangers of a firearm, and the responsibility of owning a gun to be a reasonable precaution.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony and holding hearings on SB 1551.

Respectfully submitted,

John DeJarnatt

I'm Allen DeWitt, a Portland resident for over 20 years. I'm writing you to strongly encourage you to pass SB1551.

As a former criminal defense attorney practicing in Boston, I was all too familiar with gun violent crimes, too often where a husband or boyfriend shot and killed the woman. As you know 40% of all guns sold in the US are sold through private sellers. Yes, my experience of private sales many times was with defendants who'd "rent or buy a piece" out of the trunk of a car, from other criminals.

This is certainly no excuse to not close the private sale loophole. Most private sales are done by sellers who are not criminals. Those sellers will be deterred by legal consequences if they fail to run a background check. Some potential killers will be prevented from this quickest deadly access.

We will never be able to get to 0 sales of guns to felons, to the mentally ill, and to abusive spouses but surely saving even one life is worth the slight cost and inconvenience of expanding the background check coverage. With the technology existing today, citing inconvenience is a total ruse and a dodge.

If you do not support and vote for this bill, then are you ready and willing to talk to the Oregon families who lost their child, who lost their husband or their wife because, they lost them to a murderer who was a felon, or mentally ill, or an abuser but was still able to buy a gun from his neighbor, from a friend of a friend, or over the internet ?

Tell me please, what will you say to them about why you didn't pass this bill, a bill which would have kept the gun out of the hands of one, who in a flash, snuffed out like a candle the life of their dear one ?

Who will live and not get gunned down in Oregon this year ?



MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Flyod Prozanski
Vice Chair Betsy Close
Members of the Committee

From: Leigh Dolin, MD, OMA Past President

Date: February 6, 2014

Re: Support of SB 1551 – Background Check Expansion

The OMA supports SB 1551 as an initiative that strengthens existing gun laws by requiring background checks for all gun sales and transfers, with the exception of sales to family members. The OMA recognizes that gun safety is a major factor in morbidity and mortality and believes that requiring background checks on all guns sales and transfers is a preventative measure that works. From 1994 to 2008, according to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), background checks have prevented 1.8 million prohibited people in the United States, including felons and the mentally ill, from buying guns.

SB 1551 strengthens Oregon's existing law by requiring that gun sales between private parties be preceded by a background check. Current law only requires purchasers of guns sold by licensed dealers or sellers at gun shows to be subject to a background check. This expanded background check will help keep guns out of the hands of criminals, people who are mentally ill and others who should not have guns. Background checks do not prevent law abiding citizens from buying or owning guns.

A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on the correlation between firearm legislation and firearm-related fatalities found that states with background checks on private sales had 16 percent lower firearm fatality rates.¹

As a physician and former major in the military, I understand the importance of gun safety for my patients and support preventative measures that ensure guns are obtained and stored appropriately in the home. Universal background checks are a step in the right direction; background checks are a deterrent to those who shouldn't buy guns, thereby increasing the safety of my patients.

The OMA urges your support of SB 1551.

The Oregon Medical Association is an organization of over 7,800 physicians, physician assistants, and medical students organized to serve and support physicians in their efforts to improve the health of Oregonians. Additional information can be found at www.theOMA.org.

¹ Fleegler et. al (2013). "Firearm Legislation and Firearm-Related Fatalities in the United States," *Journal of American Medical Association*.

To: Chair Prozanski

From: Paul and Judith Fardig, 1066 SW Westwood Drive Portland, OR 97239

Paul and I as public health advocates (retired U.S. Public Health Service officer and retired Certified Nurse-Midwife, respectively) feel strongly that the rate of homicide and suicide in Oregon and across the nation is definitely correlated with lax gun laws and requires a change in legislation. Other developed countries do not tolerate unfettered access to guns and have a much lower death rate from them than the United States.

When the vast majority of Oregonians favor closing the background check loophole for private sales except for family members, the legislature should listen to them, not the NRA which has become a bullying lobbyist for the weapons and munitions manufacturers, not an advocate for hunters. We plan to be in Salem Thursday to support passage of SB 1551. Of course it won't solve the whole complex issue of gun-related deaths, but it will help keep dangerous weapons away from dangerous people like convicted felons, domestic abusers, and the violently mentally ill.

We feel this bill IS a compromise. Ultimately, we would like to see smart-trigger technology be mandated so only a licensed owner can fire that gun and a requirement to purchase liability insurance for all weapons.

Thank you for holding hearings on SB 1551.

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

My name is Arlene Gardner, I am 75 years old and live in Wilsonville Oregon. Being 75 gives a person a long wide perspective on things and S 1551 is the right thing to do and this is the right time to do it. While not denying the role mental health in the issue of gun violence, the easy access to guns cannot be ignored. Never did I imagine that in my lifetime I would experience fear over simple playdates and the need to ask "Do you have a gun in your home?" S 1551 is a first step. Please act now to pass S 1551.
Thanks

I strongly support

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee,

I strongly support background checks for any and all gun purchasers. Our country continues to have more gun deaths per capita than any other developed country. Many of these deaths are caused by our "easy buy" culture which puts guns into the hands of people who impulsively kill themselves and/or others shortly after purchase. Some of these people would probably not act in these violent ways if they had more services and had to wait. People with a known history of violence should not have guns. Please pass Senate Bill 1551.

Thank you, Dell Goldsmith



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

February 6, 2014

To: Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Members of the Committee

Re: SB 1551 Criminal Background Checks before Transfer of Firearms—SUPPORT

The League is a non-partisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed citizen participation in government. We support SB 1551, based on our national gun safety position, which states in part that “the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens.” Oregon’s current background check law has been effective, but it needs to be strengthened, particularly in the area of online sales, which allow far too many firearms to end up in the wrong hands.

Of course, no single law can prevent all gun violence. However, the body of evidence from states where similar laws exist is irrefutable. Universal background checks do save lives—the lives of crime victims, the lives of domestic abuse victims, the lives of children who are shot accidentally, the lives of bystanders in mass shootings, and the lives of those contemplating suicide.

The League is a well-known supporter of citizen rights as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. However, SB 1551 in no way infringes on the rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms, as guaranteed by the 2nd Amendment. By prohibiting the transfer of firearms to criminals and the seriously mental ill, it acknowledges the rights of all citizens to be free from violence, as well as government’s responsibility to insure the health and safety of its citizens.

The crisis of gun violence will not cure itself as long as gaping holes exist in current law. Delay will inevitably cost lives. The League, a proud member of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Gun Violence, strongly urges a yes vote on SB 1551 this session. Eighty percent of Oregonians are asking legislators to put partisan politics aside and do the right thing to ensure a healthier and safer state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Wisdom".

Robin Wisdom
President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marge Easley".

Marge Easley
Past President

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Bethany Harvey, and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am a Registered Nurse and a current graduate student in the Oregon Masters of Public Health program. I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 1551 in order to promote public safety by closing the private sales loophole that currently makes it simple to buy a gun. I find this particularly important as six months ago, I lost a family member to multiple gunshot wounds. She was an active duty Captain in the US Army, yet was killed here in her home due to domestic violence. I want to show my support for other domestic violence victims by urging you to support this Bill and making it more difficult for abusers to quickly obtain a gun and to expand background checks in Oregon. I appreciate your help in this and ask that you please send me a response if you are able to pass this Bill.

Thank you for your time and for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Bethany Harvey, RN, BSN

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

My name is Gillian Hearst and my husband, Patrick Collier, and I are from Stayton on the Linn County side of town, east of Stayton proper and west of Lyons. We moved here from Chicago in 2003 in part to get away from gun violence, because, though Chicago is a "gun-free zone," that doesn't mean the rest of the region is too. That is why as responsible gun owners we wholeheartedly support passage of Senate Bill 1551 to close the private gun sale loophole through such places as the Internet and classified ads.

Penny Okamoto, executive director of Ceasefire Oregon, said in an opinion piece in "The Statesman Journal" newspaper last Friday that, "Statistics show states requiring a background check have lower rates of gun violence, including a 38 percent lower rate of domestic violence homicide with a firearm (2010 data from the FBI and the state of Florida), and a 49 percent lower rate of suicide with a firearm (2010 data from the Centers for Disease Control)."

During 2012, Oregon background checks stopped the sale of 2,378 guns to people with a criminal background. So, passage of Senate Bill 1551 would greatly aid in shutting down the growing Internet gun marketplaces where private gun sales occur without background checks and where criminals and domestic abusers are bound to obtain guns.

Passing Senate Bill 1551 would also keep our law enforcement officers safer by slowing the trade in illegal guns. I (Gillian Hearst) head the neighborhood watch for my area and have spoken with several police on this issue. Though they cannot publicly state their views, in my conversations with police their views are unequivocally in support of gun safety laws such as Senate Bill 1551. Their job is dangerous enough. So, please close the private gun sale loophole with passage of Senate Bill 1551.

To again cite from Okamoto's "Statesman Journal" opinion piece last Friday, "Gun violence is a serious public health problem in our communities. On average, at least one Oregonian dies from firearm injury every day. Like the dangers of drunk driving or prescription drug abuse, no one single policy will stop every tragedy from occurring. But we can take clear steps to reduce the prevalence of gun tragedies."

Yes, no one single policy will stop every tragedy from occurring. Yet, as representatives of the people of the amazing state of Oregon, one of your duties is to legislate against tragedy befalling your constituents. Again from Okamoto's opinion piece, "...after Missouri repealed universal background checks in 2007, the gun murder rate in the state rose 25 percent (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives). Please support passage of Senate Bill 1551. Please don't turn the great state of Oregon into the tragic state of Missouri. Help strengthen universal background checks.

Thank you for your time and attention to our testimony.

Sincerely,

Gillian Hearst & Patrick Collier
Stayton, Oregon

My name is Sandra Hopkins. My address is 18160 Cottonwood Road, Sunriver Oregon.

The issue before the Oregon Legislature is additional safeguards to prevent guns being aquired by individuals through loopholes in current gun purchasing laws in the State of Oregon.

I fully support closing these loopholes to make it more difficult for anyone with a criminal past, mental health issues, or a history of violent abuse to purchase a gun from any source, including online sales or private sales between individuals.

To be clear, I am supportive of the right to bare arms as granted by our national Constitution. I grew up in a hunting family as did my husband. We own hunting guns.

Regardless of how responsible I am with guns, I have experienced and survived gun violence at the hands of others. I do not wish that experience on anyone. I know what can happen when guns are in the wrong hands, and you are in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Adding to my concerns, is the dearth of mental health services for adolescents in Central Oregon, an increase in the region of methamphetamine production, importation and usage as well as an alarming increase in availability and use of heroin.

Our state has already experienced one major school shooting incident, and more recently a shooting in a mall. While mass shootings, and shootings in general are increasing the public awareness of guns in the wrong hands, we in Oregon can do more to protect our children, ourselves and our neighbors from such tragic violence.

I urge Oregon legislators not to fail their constituents, not fail the futures of our children and not fail the safety of Oregonians. Close the loopholes. Make sure the guns sold in Oregon are not being easily sold to criminals, the mentally unstable, drug abusers and those with an established history violence. Do the right thing.

Respectfully,
Sandra Hopkins
Sunriver, Oregon

MY FAMILY'S GUN PRACTICES

THE QUESTION - How responsible is your family about guns?

1. My older son is an emergency department physician that is visited daily by the 'Tacoma, Wash. gun and knife club.' He and I both believe that guns should not be in homes, that guns should be reserved for hunting and law enforcement only. Hunting guns should be secured in a neighborhood facility.

2. Both my son and I lived with the 'Gun & Drug Club,' for three years in the 'Hood' of northeast Portland, Oregon. We lived behind three locked doors, a security system and were guarded by Emanuel Hospital. Even so, we were robbed three times, I was assaulted twice. My son grew to intern in Oakland, Calif. one of the worst of American gang cities.

3. Think of this - guns in homes account for 80% of all gun violence against one's self, or one's loved ones. Think of this - would you harbor a pet alligator in your home if you knew you had an 80% chance that your pet would turn against you or your child?

4. Two depressed women in my extended family committed suicide by shooting themselves in the face with revolvers. My maternal first cousin in Salem, Ore., and my fraternal Aunt, a successful ranch woman, in Karnack, Texas. My cousin shot herself in front of her 8-year-old-son. These brilliant and talented women would probably be alive and thriving today with an after appropriate psychiatric treatment. Psychiatry can kill, but modern psychiatry frequently does help and WORK!

5. Gun violence is terminal, unforgiving and sad! My first birth son, my stepson and I have NO GUNS IN OUR HOMES. My stepson is an active Baha'i who would not even consider touching a weapon. My younger son has hunting guns and knives only, stored in a locked gun locker, (about \$1,000.) He does plan to hunt with his golden retriever, his lady-friend and Grandpa Sgt. James' guns.

6. Remember, ALL GUNS ARE LOADED GUNS! NO EXCEPTIONS!

THE QUESTION - How responsible is your family about guns?

*'Jamie' Betty Arlene James, RN, BS, ret.
Elected to FC-UCC Peace, Justice & Environment Team
Creative, empathic, realistic, resilient & unique!
bettyajames@gmail.com, Salem, Oregon, FACEBOOK - JamieJournalist*

###

RE: SB 1551

Dear Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

My name is Kylie Menagh-Johnson and I live in Portland, OR.

I'd like to tell you about my dad. He dropped out of Purdue University to enlist in the Marines and served two tours of duty in Viet Nam. He met my mom at Oregon State, and dropped out of college again when he got restationed. He never graduated, but he did make Captain, and he was a great dad. He taught me about pride and self-discipline and responsibility. Once, he even tried to teach me how to shoot a hunting rifle.

He also taught me about compassion and justice. He was a good man. He loved being a dad, and built a playground in our backyard with a zip line where all the neighborhood kids loved to play. He took us fishing and killed any snakes that were in our path. He was the only dad to serve as a yard monitor at recess at my grade school. Once, he thrilled the neighborhood by setting off a smoke bomb from his left-over arsenal. He loved to spook all the neighborhood kids at Halloween, and one year, he wore a Jimmy Carter mask. And yes, he was very much a Republican.

In 1984, while we were shopping for Father's Day at the PX, he was killed. He was shot by 'friendly fire' during a practice drill. Despite his vest, he was blown to bits by a machine gun, leaving my mom a widow at the age of 32 with four kids and another on the way.

His funeral was closed-casket.

I've had to live for 30 years with the image of his final moments in my head, so I know a little about what it's like to lose a loved one at the end of a gun.

My dad had high standards. He set a high bar for himself and for everybody else. He would be embarrassed and enraged at the state of our nation, where we make it easy for criminals and wife beaters to buy guns from unlicensed dealers online and out of the back trunks of cars. He would be furious that we don't require background checks for all gun sales. He would be sickened by the carnage, especially all the children whose lives have been lost at the hands of undisciplined, criminally insane gun men.

If he were alive today, I'm confident my dad would rip up his NRA card, knowing that gun manufacturers use the NRA leadership and the gun lobby to incite fear and paranoia about our "tyrannical government" in order to drive up sales. He would be ashamed to belong to an organization that chooses to cater to criminals by blocking background checks.

In my dad's memory, I'm asking you to stand up for pride, self-discipline, responsibility, and compassion. Please do not stand on the side of criminals and the criminally insane. Please vote yes on SB 1551.

Thank you,

Kylie Menagh-Johnson
4826 NE Mason St.
Portland, OR 97218

Chair Prozansky, members of the committee,

I am writing in support of SB1551, which would close the current background check loophole. At this time, convicted felons, domestic abusers, and the seriously mentally ill can easily acquire guns through private sales. We have seen the disastrous results that occur nearly daily on our streets and in public places. I've heard the family members of the two innocents shot at Clackamas Town Center speak with heart- wrenching shock and sadness about their loss. The morning of Sandy Hook, I would have been reading with two six-year-olds at a Portland school; however, they had an assembly. When I heard the awful news, I wanted to race to the school and hold these adorable children. The whole situation was very real to me, as I could picture the little bodies and imagine the terror. We must, as responsible adults, do everything we can to keep guns out of the hands of those who would harm innocent children and adults, while protecting the rights of lawful gun owners. Please vote yes on SB1551.

Mary Jubitz, 0841 SW Gaines, Portland, OR 97239.

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee

My name is Elizabeth Julee, I live in the Garden Home area of unincorporated Washington County. I am a grandmother, greatgrandmother and retired Physician Assistant. Appropriate gun control laws are a public health issue. Please vote to approve SB 1551. This law will help make our communities safer.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Julee

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

Interchurch Center, Suite B ■ 0245 SW Bancroft Street ■ Portland, Oregon 97239
phone (503) 221-1054 ■ fax (503) 223-7007 ■ Web site www.emoregon.org

February 5, 2014

Written Testimony on SB 1551

Chair Prozanski, and members of the committee:

My name is David Leslie and I am executive director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO), an association of Christian denominations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners from all regions and communities throughout the state. Although our members have diverse beliefs, there is strong interreligious consensus that it is time to support measures that promote responsible gun ownership in our society. This commitment grows out of witnessing an increase of death and injury caused by guns in our neighborhoods, places of worship, shopping malls and schools. In the midst of the seemingly unending call for more weapons in more places and at all times of the day and night, we say it is time for sensible action that improves the health and wellness of all in society. As Dr. King said in a sermon just four days before his death, “Nothing will be done until people of goodwill put their bodies and their souls in motion.”

Towards these ends, EMO supports common sense measures that will pass the constitutional test of responsible gun ownership, while minimizing irresponsible access, display and utilization of weapons. We support SB 1551 because it closes a loophole that currently allows the private sale of guns between two parties without a background check. These sales have moved to the internet and other unregulated arenas, where sellers often advertise no-background-check gun sales. In states that require a background check for the sale of every handgun, 38% fewer women are shot to death by an intimate partner.

We believe that expanding background checks to most gun sales, including sales between private parties, will improve safety and reduce the risk of gun-related violence. A January 2013 pollⁱ found that 81 percent of Oregonians support universal background checks on all gun sales. Background checks work. Federal background checks have stopped more than 2.1 million prohibited purchasers, including felons, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill, from buying guns. We acknowledge that gun ownership is a right that entails major responsibilities, which we believe includes background checks before purchase to ensure that guns are sold only to those who are legally and mentally in a position to own firearms.

SB 1551 will enhance the common good, make our communities safer, and strengthen responsible gun ownership. While the decisions related to gun ownership are not easy, you must act. It is clear that we are on a trajectory of growing violence in which guns of increasing killing power are used more and more often to inflict maximum havoc and injury by those who have no business having access to these weapons. We must turn this tide, and as Dr. King said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” Gun violence is a matter of great importance. We must not remain silent. I urge you to support SB 1551.

Respectfully,
David Leslie
Executive Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

ⁱJeff Mapes, “Oregonians skeptical of gun control in general, but support some new firearm restrictions,” *The Oregonian*, Feb. 2, 2013, at http://oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/02/oregonians_skeptical_of_gun_co.html.

“Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:”

My name is Dawn Lichter and in live in unincorporated clackamas county, bordering on the Rosewood area and Lake Oswego. We have had our scares with gun violence in the neighborhood and believe it would be helpful to stop the sale of guns to mentally ill people and criminals. Our police would be a little safer and so would domestic violence victims by slowing the purchase for the abuser.

**Please support,
*Support of Senate Bill 1551.***

Background Checks Save Lives

Dawn Lichter



PO Box 331 • Salem, OR 97308
(503) 585-3484 • fax 888-244-7684
info@cmionline.org • www.cmionline.org

January 30, 2014

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cheri Lovre, and I live in Salem, Oregon. My work in responding to school crisis includes having spend weeks helping administrators after the shooting at Thurston High School (May 1998), Columbine (April 1999), Nickel Mines Amish School (October 2006) and three more. I was asked by the Chancellor of New York Department of Education to work with the 29 "schools that fled" from Ground Zero on 9/11. I know school shootings. I know about death related to crisis. I know about students being evacuated when "the air was pink" because those jumping to their deaths were so close. If anybody wants to end school shootings and mass terror, it would be me.

I've walked the bloody cafeterias before the evidence tags are removed from overturned chairs and abandoned backpacks. I've faced bereft parents, terrified school staff and traumatized emergency responders.

I've listened to all sides of this issue, from the ridiculous to the uninformed to the outrageous. And I would love to be giving testimony in person, but I was already committed to providing training in school crisis prevention and response for all of south-western Oregon.

There is no question that background checks is a solid first step in our getting a handle on what has become an epidemic. The Boston Gun Project dropped homicide deaths of young people in Boston from 73 down to 11 over a six-year period of time by tracing every weapon used in a youth homicide and closing down the gun shops that were selling weapons illegally to youth. It's pretty tough to argue with that.

I'm hoping you'll have the courage to do what is best for our youth, best for our schools, and an honest step in the right direction. Require back-ground checks.

Thank you ~

Cheri Lovre
Salem, OR

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Joncile Martin and I am a 73 year old retired grandmother living in West Linn, Oregon. I am writing to you today to beg you to pass the SB 1551 and require background checks on the sale of guns. I do this because, as an elderly citizen, I can no longer feel safe going to our shopping malls, our coffee shops, our theaters, our schools, or our parks. We have become a vigilante society where too many people feel the need to own, carry, and use a gun with little or no provocation.

I realize that background checks will not solve all the existing problems with guns but it would be one small, positive step toward reducing the violence that we read about in the papers every day. I certainly support the Second amendment but I do not believe our forefathers ever envisioned a country where we would have so many guns and so many deaths and injuries due to those guns. As a citizen of this country, I believe that I also have a Constitutional right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Let's do what we can to make Oregon a safer place to live, to work, and to enjoy life. Let's do all we can to keep our children safe. Let's pass this bill and require background checks on gun sales.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Joncile Martin
4051 Sussex Street
West Linn, Oregon
503-655-6247

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee,

The Oregon legislature has an opportunity to do something about the kind of mass murder school shooting planned by Grant Accord at West Albany High School. His plan involved the acquiring of a semi-automatic rifle and pump-action shotgun, and to out-do Columbine with its 15 deaths.

Being 17, he could not purchase a long gun legally. But without background checks he could obtain them from a private seller. No questions asked. That loophole can be closed by passing SB 1551 in the Oregon legislature.

Are we prepared to say we are not willing to do anything to reduce the likelihood of mass shootings at Oregon schools? That's not the Oregon I'm proud of.

Dick Mase
2545 SW Terwilliger Blvd. #411
Portland, Oregon 97201

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Sarah Finger McDonald. I live in Corvallis. I am the mother of two children, ages 8 and 3, and I am the Oregon chapter leader of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

The members of Moms Demand Action are mothers, fathers, teachers, and concerned members of the community. Our children are our most precious gifts and their care is our greatest responsibility. It is our duty to create communities where children and families can thrive free from the threat of gun violence. It is our duty to do everything we can to fight the epidemic of violence that took the lives of 2,036 Oregonians between 2006 and 2010¹. It is your duty as elected public servants to pass SB 1551, common-sense legislation that will save the lives of Oregonians while preserving their rights.

Expanding background checks reduces crime and saves lives. It is not “gun control” legislation; it is crime control and suicide prevention legislation. It will save the lives of law enforcement officers and reduce aggravated assaults with firearms².

Over 80% of the Oregon gun deaths in 2012 were suicides¹. We have all seen the news stories about gun suicides in Oregon outpacing traffic deaths. We are doing a poor job of keeping guns out of the hands of people who would compulsively hurt themselves. States that require background checks on all gun purchases have a gun suicide rate 49% lower than states that do not require background checks on all purchases² whereas the rates of non-firearm suicide do not differ. Passing SB 1551 and closing the private sale loophole, including online, would reduce gun suicides in Oregon. SB 1551 would save lives and save families communities from the grief of dealing with the aftermath of suicide.

In Oregon, 61% of the homicide victims murdered by intimate partners were killed with

guns³. Research has also shown that when a gun is present in a domestic violence situation, the risk of a homicide occurring increases by 500%. They increase the risk that a woman will be killed and that her children will lose their mother. Once again, background checks are a common-sense solution to this problem. In states that require background checks on all gun sales, 38% fewer women are shot to death by their intimate partners². 38% fewer families lose their mother, sister, or daughter.

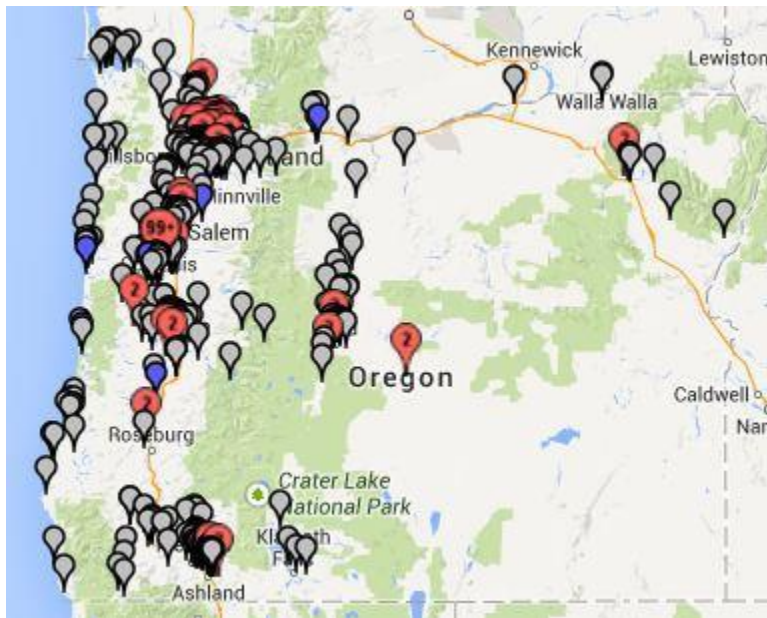
SB 1551, by making it more difficult for criminals, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill to buy guns, will reduce deaths in Oregon. It will not keep law abiding Oregonians from purchasing guns. Anyone who can pass a background check will still be allowed to buy a gun. Over 96% of the background checks performed by licensed gun dealers and at gun shows in Oregon were completed in less than five minutes. No background check in Oregon has ever resulted in gun registration; gun registration is prohibited by statute. Licensed gun dealers have been performing background checks in Oregon since 1989 and background checks have been required at gun shows since 2000. But the few minutes it takes to perform a background check does result in fewer lives lost to gun violence and fewer families and communities left to grieve.

Moms Demand Action supports the 2nd Amendment, but we believe common-sense solutions can help decrease the escalating epidemic of gun violence that killed, on average, one Oregon child or teenager each week between 2006-2010¹. Whether the gun violence happens in urban Portland, suburban Hillsboro, or rural Grant County, we must act now on stronger gun laws to protect our children and our communities. SB 1551 will save lives in Oregon without infringing on the right of law-abiding citizens to purchase and use guns. It is just common-sense and it is time to act.

About the Oregon chapter of Moms Demand Action

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America is a grassroots organization that was

founded in response to the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School to work to work for common-sense reforms to our gun laws. The organization has chapters in all 50 states. The Oregon chapter was created by merging 3 chapters; Portland, Mid-Willamette, and Southern Oregon. We have members from across the state working to reduce gun violence in Oregon.



Where members of the Oregon chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America live.

1. Oregon Public Health Division. Firearm Fatalities in Oregon, Oregon Injury and Violence Prevention Program Fact Sheet, 2012 <http://public.health.oregon.gov/>. Web. 1 Feb. 2014
2. Mayors Against Illegal Guns. Evidence that Background Checks Work. 2013. <http://bit.ly/1d08n5b>. Web 1 Feb. 2014
3. Oregon Public Health Division. Homicide in Oregon Related to Intimate Partner Violence: Oregon Injury Prevention and Epidemiology Fact Sheet. 2012. <http://public.health.oregon.gov/>. Web 1 Feb. 2014.

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee.

My name is James V. McGoodwin, I am a retired lawyer living in Terwilliger Plaza, SW Portland, Oregon, 97201.

Weather and circumstances permitting, I plan to attend the hearing on Thursday, February 6, 2014. I do not expect to be able to testify in person.

My message is simple: I consider it the duty of elected legislators to take all reasonable measures to protect me and the Oregon citizenry. I think Senate Bill #1551 is a miniscule step in that direction but certainly a positive one. To fail to enact this bill seems to me to be a statement that it really is, as is widely assumed to be the case, that it is up to the citizens to buy guns and ammo to try to protect ourselves from each other. Statistically, of course, that is not a realistic course to take. I know that is not what I want and I am informed that it is not the scenario desired by a huge majority of Oregonians. I urge you to take the steps necessary to enact Senate Bill #1551.

James V. McGoodwin
uigin2@tplaza.org

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

It is a sad fact of life that most of us have in some way been impacted by an act of gun violence. With over 30,000 gun related deaths each year in the U.S. and twice as many people injured this is not so surprising. Over the years it adds up.

For me it was my Aunt who was the victim of gun violence. She was shot during a robbery on her way home from the store. The robbers were ultimately caught and tried (they were both repeat offenders) but my Aunt was paralyzed from the waist down for the rest of her life.

She lived in constant pain. She had many surgeries but these did little to ease her suffering. She survived a few years and mercifully passed away in her mid-50s. The emotional and financial strains on her family were staggering.

Each year the tens of thousands of incidents of gun violence create more stories of death and suffering, many even more tragic than my Aunt's.

With SB 1551 the Oregon legislature has the opportunity to close loop holes in the existing background check laws and make it more difficult for felons and individuals with mental issues to buy firearms. Simply put, passing this legislation will save lives and prevent injuries in the future.

Opponents of this legislation will say criminals will still find ways to get the guns they want. Yes some will, but not all. Over time SB 1551 will certainly have the impact similar laws have had in other states, significantly reduced firearm related deaths and injuries.

In closing I respectfully ask the Committee and the entire legislature to support SB 1551. Let's close these loopholes and provide a safer Oregon for ourselves and our children. You have a chance to save some lives, don't let it slip away.

Thank you.

Jeffrey L. Moering

Lake Oswego, OR

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

I am Amy Jo Mooney and I live in Portland (97232).

I am writing in support of Bill 1551, believing wholeheartedly that we need to close the loopholes in order to keep guns out of the hands of those, who may be a danger to themselves or others. Those with significant Mental Health issues, who fall into the category of potential harm; felons; and those, with a history of domestic abuse or a restraining order simply should not be able to access weapons.

My reasons are quite personal. I was first affected by gun violence in 10th grade when I awoke to learn that my uncle had shot my aunt and then himself, leaving behind two children. Ten years later and I found our family frantically searching for my brother, who had bought a gun and was trying to find his ex-wife, who had just placed a restraining order on him. He never should have been able to purchase a gun due to the restraining order and the fact that he had spent time in the psych ward the year before after attempting to commit suicide. Just by sheer circumstance, my brother could not locate his ex, saving her, her three children, my brother and our family from devastation. Three weeks ago I learned that a woman I graduated with from high school was shot by her husband, who then shot himself, while their 8-year old son was home. Their other two children happened to be away at the time.

I am asking for better gun control laws not only for these tragedies, but a much closer reality that I could not bear to have occur. I have a 15-year old son, who is brilliant, creative, compassionate, intense, and much beloved. My precious boy also suffers from depression and anxiety. He has talked about suicide since before he entered kindergarten. He is presently coming out of a severe, clinical depression and just told me that he is working really hard every day just to stay alive. When asked at the emergency room if he had a plan, he calmly stated that he'd use a gun. I am thankful for every day that this boy does not have access to any guns. We have been and are doing everything we can to keep my son healthy, from therapy since he was five to homeopathy to western medicine.

I am asking that you make a commitment to me and all the other mothers of children with mental health issues like my son's, that they will not be allowed to buy any weapons. Close the loopholes and keep guns out of the hands of people, who would be a danger to themselves and/or others.

I am making a plea today that you help me keep my son alive. He is an incredible person and his mark in this world should never be based on a tragedy that we have the means to prevent.

Thank you~
amy jo mooney

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Andrea Murphy and I have lived in NE Portland's Alberta district since 1977, zip code 97211. I am a gun owner and mother and believe that Senate Bill 1551 will help keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people who shouldn't have them.

In March of 1994 I lost a good friend to gun violence.

Maybe some of you remember Bob the Weather Cat. My friend, Sheilagh, rescued the beat up, grey and white stray cat who became Bob and, initially, made all of his costumes. Without her intervention and creativity we would never have known Bob. It may not seem like a big thing but that silly, tolerant cat brought joy to many people. We lost someone, nearly 20 years ago, who actively contributed to the world around her in positive ways. That ended in the early morning of 3/21/94 when she was robbed and shot in the head while cleaning up after hours at Belmont's Inn. One of the most horrible things about it was that a woman named Cheryl, who Sheilagh had been helping through a rough patch, was directly involved. Cheryl let her brother into the bar after closing in order to rob the bar till and when Sheilagh tried to get away, there was a struggle and she saw his face. When she saw him it was over, he executed her with a single bullet just inside the front door. They left with all of \$500 but, thankfully, were caught within a month or so and brought back to trial. Now, I don't know if universal background checks would have stopped her murderer, but what her story illustrates is how easily someone can be betrayed by a trusted friend. Hardly a day goes by that I don't think of her and, as bad as I feel, how much worse must it be for her family? **I am going into more detail in writing than I will if I have a chance to speak. I don't have contact with her family and want to respect their privacy.** There are several stories about Sheilagh's murder in the Oregonian archives in March and April of 1994 if anyone is interested in further details. I recommend the short you tube video titled "Bob the Weather Cat 1" though. It's a grainy video of Sheilagh describing how she found him. She called him Hank. "Bob" was just a stage name someone at KATU came up with. Hearing her voice again after all these years hit me hard but I'm so glad she has 46 seconds of immortality. It's something.

I can't understand opposition to this bill. Why would anyone *trust a stranger* enough to sell a gun to them without checking them out? I should think that anyone who is truly a responsible gun owner would voluntarily go get a background check done before a private sale in the first place, which would eliminate the need for Senate Bill 1551. I'm sure some do. I would, because I want my conscience clear. Unfortunately, it appears too many others don't care who they sell a gun to and can't be bothered to take the time and make sure the buyer is not prohibited from owning one. That makes this bill very necessary and I hope you will support it. Thank you.

RE: SB 1551

Dear Chair Prozanski and members of the committee:

My name is Kara Murray, and I am a mother of two boys, ages 9 and 5, and a business owner from Southwest Portland. I am also a member of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, a grassroots organization working towards common sense gun reform. I have taken the day off work to ask you to pass common sense gun legislation. I speak for my friends and relatives, who were not able to be here today, due to work or child care schedules.

I remember where I was sitting on that day in December 2012 when I heard the news that 20 children and 6 educators had been killed at Sandy Hook Elementary. My thoughts immediately went to my own children, who were at school at that time. In the year since that day, I have become aware of the ease in which firearms are acquired in Oregon and nationally.

I am calling on State legislators to pass SB 1551 and extend background checks to private sales, including those transacted online, using the existing background check system already employed by licensed dealers and at gun shows. In 2012, that system stopped 2,378 gun transfers in Oregon because the buyer failed the criminal background check. In 2013, that system stopped 2,215 gun transfers. It is clear that the current background check system, encompassing Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers and gun shows, is effective.

Why not close the private sale loophole and require background checks on private sales as well? Have you checked out Armslist.com? An investigation conducted last September by Mayors Against Illegal Guns found that 1 in 30 Armslist buyers had a criminal record that prohibited them from buying a gun — but there was no background check system there to stop them from doing so.¹ How many firearms being sold on this site are asking for cash payment, no ID required? Why make it easy for

¹ Felon Seeks Firearm, September 2013, available online at: <http://bit.ly/1elyFlk>

criminals and the dangerously mentally ill to acquire these weapons?
Background checks do not prevent law abiding citizens from obtaining
firearms.

Our community and our children deserve a country free of gun violence.

Sincerely,
Kara Murray
4627 SW Condor Ave.
Portland OR 97239

Dear Chair Prozanski and members of the committee,

I'm writing today in support of Senate Bill 1551.

I write on behalf of all the stay-at-home moms who share my concerns on this issue. Many mothers are busy today, spending the day caring for young children, preparing meals, shuttling children to school, volunteering in schools, and helping our families. But, I know that all of us ache each time we hear of another gun 'tragedy' in our nation. We hold our children and pray that it will stop. We are eager for our government act through common sense legislature to bring greater safety to our state.

Senate Bill 1551 is a positive step for Oregon. Background checks provide a clearly defined system to ensure that firearms are responsibly sold. A loophole that allows some individuals to bypass these measures is illogical. In fact, it almost serves as an invitation for criminals to side-step the system. Simply said, Senate Bill 1551 closes the loophole and makes the current system of background checks fair and consistent for all.

Mothers in Oregon; children in Oregon; citizens of Oregon need leadership in support of a more thoughtful and intentional process related to the legal access to lethal weapons. I ask you to support Senate Bill 1551 and bring common sense gun laws to Oregon.

Respectfully,
Angela Obery
Salem, Oregon

State Street Solutions

P.O. Box 2348 | Lake Oswego, OR 97035

www.StateStreetSolutions.com | info@StateStreetSolutions.com



February 6, 2014
Sen. Floyd Prozanski
Senate Judiciary Committee
State Capitol

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1551

Chairman Prozanski and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, please **Support Senate Bill 1551**.

The easy access of firearms and its accompanying violence has taken a terrible toll on America, particularly on its youth.

The proliferation of firearms, both legal and illegal, and illegal gun use is staggering. Thus, there has been an explosion of gun violence in our country which each year kills or wounds more than one hundred thousand innocent children and adults. No community, no segment of society is safe from gun violence.

Last year in Chicago, a white supremacist indiscriminately fired on individuals walking down the street and families returning home from synagogue. In Littleton, Colorado, two high school students gunned down twelve fellow classmates and one teacher before killing themselves. And in the Los Angeles area, a lone gunman opened fire on children at the Jewish Community Center, and later shot and killed a Filipino American postal worker.

Almost fifty people every single day intentionally kill themselves with firearms; since the 1950's, suicide has increased by three times among young people. Countless others are killed or maimed by accidental or negligent firearm use.

Oregonians are deeply troubled by these firearm tragedies, and our public officials need to respond. Individuals of all faiths and beliefs must join together to stop the gun violence, and the Jewish community must take the lead.

We believe that current laws must be enforced and that new common-sense legislation is needed to stem the rising tide of gun violence throughout the United States. The *Jewish Federation of Greater Portland* and its member agencies call on all legislators to make this country safer by stemming the tide of violence that puts us all at risk.

Please Support Senate Bill 1551 and move it to the floor with a Do Pass recommendation.

Thank you,

George Okulitch

Dear Oregon State Senators, I am counting on you to put the safety of our children and families and the entire community as your highest priority and to pass Senate bill 1551 to expand background checks for all gun sales. Background checks do work when applied to all gun sales. Please have the courage to stand up now and vote for the safety of us all. Vote Yes on SB 1551.

Anita Owen, 1795 Summer St SE Salem 97302, 503-463-6733

www.oregonfundraising.org

Anita Owen, Oregon Fund Raising, 503-463-6733

www.oregonfundraising.org

"Wishing you Happy Holidays and Healthy Happy 2014"

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee,

A graduate student displays a variety of erratic and mentally unstable behaviors. The same graduate student subsequently posts on Facebook a video of himself shooting an array of guns he owns. Erratic behavior continues. A department in lock down ensues.

This is what my husband and his colleagues experienced recently here in Oregon. This man should not have had guns. I don't know how he purchased his guns but cracking down on private gun sales loopholes would certainly be a start toward more responsible gun ownership. But as it was, there was *nothing* that anyone could do but hope this young man did not join the long list of mass shooters and that they did not become one in the long list of victims of mass shootings. Responsible gun owners support SB 1551. I hope you will, too.

Thank you for your service,

Kari Parsons
Eugene, Oregon

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

My name is Judy Plumery, and I moved to Florence, Oregon last year from Colorado. I am writing to you today to urge you to support SB 1551.

I lived in Colorado when the shooting at Columbine happened, and know first hand how devastating gun violence is to our communities. While I support citizen's rights to own firearms, I believe with that right comes a responsibility to assure the safety of our citizenry and peace officers. Closing the private gun sale loophole in Oregon is a conservative, reasonable action that will have concrete results and will not interfere with our constitutional right to bear arms. We must interpret all of our rights outlined in the Bill of Rights considering our current technology, including the 2nd amendment. Allowing uncontrolled sales of ever more dangerous weapons is surely not what the founding fathers and mothers had in mind.

Please support this reasonable action to keep our children, our peace officers, and our citizens safer. sincerely,

Judy Plumery
109 Ocean View Ct
Florence, Oregon

February 4, 2014

To: Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee

Written Testimony in Support of SB 1551

My name is Karin Radtke. I live in a rural area of Lane County, south of Yachats.

The best words to describe this Bill are “reasonable” and “sensible”. It is full of benefits to everyone. Requiring a background check on the purchaser of a gun means that:

1. The seller gains immunity from civil liability for the use of the firearm after the transfer;
2. Law enforcement officers are helped to trace stolen firearms;
3. It is more difficult for persons with a criminal history to obtain a firearm;
4. It is highly likely that fewer people will be killed or injured by a gun.

This Bill does not take away the “right” to own “arms”. However, a gun is a potentially lethal weapon, and it is people who pull the triggers on them. Currently some people are denied the purchase of a gun when they fail a background check at a gun dealer. This should be extended to all transfers of firearms (except to family members, as noted in the Bill).

Please help to raise Oregon’s grade from a D+ (according to Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 2013). Our gun laws also matter to the safety of residents in neighboring states.

Thank you,

Karin Radtke

Yachats, Oregon

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1551

Chair Prozanski, Members of the committee,

I urge you to support Senate Bill 1551 for complete background checks of guns. We now know that there are still loopholes (internet gun sales make it too easy for criminals to purchase guns). Please close those loopholes.

Pass legislation for gun control. The following articles from the American Academy of Pediatrics supports specific measures to reduce the destructive effects of guns.

Note that the regulation of the manufacture, sale, purchase, ownership and use of firearms is suggested.

Please include these articles in the testimony.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Raymond
Corvallis, Oregon 97330

• **From the American Academy of Pediatrics**

Policy Statement

Firearm-Related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population

1. **COUNCIL ON INJURY, VIOLENCE, AND POISON PREVENTION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

KEY WORDS

- child
- adolescent
- violence
- homicide
- suicide
- injury

-
- [epidemiology](#)
 - [policy](#)

- Abbreviations:

AAP —

American Academy of Pediatrics

NVDRS —

National Violent Death Reporting System

The absence of guns from children's homes and communities is the most reliable and effective measure to prevent firearm-related injuries in children and adolescents. Adolescent suicide risk is strongly associated with firearm availability. Safe gun storage (guns unloaded and locked, ammunition locked separately) reduces children's risk of injury. Physician counseling of parents about firearm safety appears to be effective, but firearm safety education programs directed at children are ineffective. The American Academy of Pediatrics continues to support a number of specific measures to reduce the destructive effects of guns in the lives of children and adolescents, including the regulation of the manufacture, sale, purchase, ownership, and use of firearms; a ban on semiautomatic assault weapons; and the strongest possible regulations of handguns for civilian use.

The following from The American Academy of Pediatrics gives facts and solutions to gun violence.

Guns in the home are a much higher risk for children. Gun control legislation is needed. Please vote for strong gun control.

Jeanne Raymond

whole article: <http://neoreviews.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/130/5/e1416.full#sec-15>

Excerpt:

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Firearm-related injury to children is associated with death and severe morbidity and is a significant public health problem. Child health care professionals can and should provide effective leadership in efforts to prevent gun violence, injury, and death. The AAP recognizes the importance of a variety of countermeasures (educational, environmental, engineering, enactment, enforcement, economic incentives, and evaluation) to dramatically curb the number of firearm-related injuries to children. The AAP makes the following recommendations, which reaffirm and expand on the 1992 and 2000 policy statements^{65,66}:

1. The AAP affirms that the most effective measure to prevent suicide, homicide, and unintentional firearm-related injuries to children and adolescents is the absence of guns from homes and communities. Although the US Supreme Court ruling in the case of *McDonald v City of Chicago* struck down comprehensive local and statewide

firearm bans, pediatricians should continue to advocate for the strongest possible legislative and regulatory approaches to prevent firearm injuries and deaths.

2. Health information for parents:
 - a. Pediatricians and other child health care professionals are urged to counsel parents about the dangers of allowing children and adolescents to have access to guns inside and outside the home. The AAP recommends that pediatricians incorporate questions about the presence and availability of firearms into their patient history taking and urge parents who possess guns to prevent access to these guns by children. Safer storage of guns reduces injuries, and physician counseling linked with distribution of cable locks appear to increase safer storage. Nevertheless, the safest home for a child or adolescent is one without firearms.
 - b. The presence of guns in the home increases the risk of lethal suicidal acts among adolescents. Health care professionals should counsel the parents of all adolescents to remove guns from the home or restrict access to them. This advice should be reiterated and reinforced for patients with mood disorders, substance abuse problems (including alcohol), or a history of suicide attempts.
3. The AAP urges that guns be subject to consumer product regulations regarding child access, safety, and design. In addition, the AAP continues to support law enforcement activities that trace the origins of firearms used in the commission of crimes and that these data be used to enforce regulations aimed at preventing illegal sales to minors.
 - a. Evidence supports the effectiveness of regulation that limits child access to firearms.
 - b. The AAP supports efforts to reduce the destructive power of handguns and handgun ammunition via regulation of the manufacture and importation of classes of guns. Engineering efforts (eg, personalized safety mechanisms and trigger locks) may be of benefit and need further study. Trigger locks, lock boxes, gun safes, and safe storage legislation are encouraged by the AAP. Other measures aimed at regulating access of guns should include legislative actions, such as mandatory waiting periods, closure of the gun show loophole, mental health restrictions for gun purchases, and background checks.
 - c. The AAP recommends restoration of the ban on the sale of assault weapons to the general public.
4. The AAP supports the funding of research related to the prevention of firearm injury, including surveillance through the NVDRS; accurate evaluation of health care-based screening and intervention; and local, regional, and national efforts to identify and disseminate violence prevention resources.

5. The AAP supports the education of physicians and other professionals interested in understanding the effects of firearms and how to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with their use.

[Previous Section](#)[Next Section](#)

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

Several years ago, an ex-boyfriend of mine killed himself with a gun. He had been slipping into a severe depression for some time. If I had still been with him, he might have killed me, too.

What was his livelihood? Working as a suicide prevention counselor for a phone hotline.

If our laws were stronger, it might not prevent every gun-related death in our communities. But we need to ask, "Are we doing everything we can to keep our families, our children, our friends, our coworkers, colleagues, teachers, law enforcement officers, government officials, safe? How safe are we when anyone can go almost anywhere, buy a gun, and start shooting in our schools, malls, libraries, homes, parks, and streets? What kind of "freedom" is that?"

That's the kind of thinking we need right now. We know that stronger laws have led to reduced gun violence in every state where they've been enacted. Please vote yes on Senate Bill 1551.

Thank you,

David Rutiezer
Portland, Oregon

--

David Rutiezer
(503) 901-1422
<http://www.creativedavid.com>

There is no doubt that some of the US population is gun crazy, and that no law is going to prevent all crimes or misuse of guns. The least we can do is have background checks, particularly to detect people who are mentally unstable. Unfortunately, budget cuts in mental health programs have had tragic consequences.

Copycat shooters give some the impression that shooting strangers is an acceptable norm. Mass communication make it possible for every incident to be broadcast to the entire country. Shootings become normal! It takes even more to convince people that you aren't supposed to just go and shoot people if you lose your cool.

Latest killings were with shotguns, not so-called assault rifles. Background checks are the least we can do re purchases of guns. It will take a moral shift to change the public attitude toward ownership and use of guns to kill people.

--

Harley L. Sachs, www.HarleySachs.com

Dear Chairman Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

We are a family of gun owners and want to add our written testimony in support of Senate bill 1551 to close the loop holes in Oregon's background check system for obtaining firearms. It seems the only sane way to proceed to protect innocent people and support responsible gun ownership.

The loop hole in allowing gun sales through the internet leaves a gaping hole in the background check system. In order to protect our police and others who might be vulnerable because of loop holes in our system, it is vitally important that you support this legislation. Thank you.

Jonathan West
Janet Schaefer
5210 Coventry Ct.
Lake Oswego, OR 97035

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Mary Senatori. I live in Portland. I am the mother of two children, ages 7 and 13. I urge you to support SB 1551 to help further protect our children and our communities from gun violence.

What SB 1551 is about:

SB 1551 is about ensuring public safety and helping save lives. It will close the private and online gun sale loophole through which hundreds of thousands of guns fall into the hands of dangerous people every year nationwide. Since 1998, background checks have blocked over 2,000,000 gun sales to felons, domestic abusers, the severely mentally ill, and other dangerous people (NICS). In 2013 in Oregon alone, background checks denied 2,215 gun transfers to criminals and the mentally ill. Given that 40% of gun sales currently proceed without background checks, closing the loophole will help stop thousands more from ending up in dangerous hands.

Passage and enforcement of SB 1551 will save lives by reducing homicides and suicides:

- * In states that require background checks for all handgun sales:
 - the domestic violence gun homicide rate is 38% lower than in states that do not. (FBI Homicide Report, 2010)
 - 39% fewer law enforcement are shot to death with handguns (FBI data, 2001-2011)
 - there are 17% fewer firearm aggravated assaults
 - there are 49 percent fewer firearm suicides, while the rates of suicide by other methods are nearly identical.

If SB 1551 could save even ONE life, it will be worth it. That life could be your loved one.

What SB 1551 is NOT about:

* SB 1551 is NOT about gun registration or confiscation. There is nothing in the bill that even hints of this, and further, gun registration is prohibited by Oregon statute.

* SB 1551 is NOT about punishing law-abiding citizens. This is nonsensical. My passing a driving test does not “punish” me as a law-abiding driver. Laws are the foundation of a modern civilized democracy. They incent behaviors that benefit the public good, help deter behaviors that degrade the public good, and provide a foundation for prosecution.

* SB 1551 does not in any way violate the 2nd Amendment. The 2008 Supreme Court has already ruled that the rights afforded under the 2nd Amendment are NOT absolute and specifically makes reference to the lawfulness of "prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill.”

In summary, Oregon legislators need only let *public safety* guide their decision-making process. NOT who can scream the loudest. NOT who can make more calls or send more emails. NOT who can distract with endless gun registration and confiscation conspiracy rants. Public safety. Children’s safety. Your family’s safety.

78% of Oregonians support background checks on all gun sales -- a proven and effective way to reduce gun violence. Let’s get this done.

Thank you,

Mary Senatori

2145 NE 18th Avenue
Portland, OR 97218

Testimony supporting SB 1551
Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell, Minister Emerita
First Unitarian Church, Portland Oregon

Five members of my extended family have been killed with guns. One was a hunting accident, another was a murder/suicide, and two were homicides.

Let me tell you one of the stories. My father came in from a fishing trip and lay down on the bed to rest. He had been drinking. My stepmother told him to get off her white chenille bedspread, with his dirty shoes and clothes, but he ignored her. She kept insisting, and he pulled a gun from underneath the bed where it was kept, pointed it at her and said, "I guess you will leave me alone now." Again, she insisted. He shot her in the chest. Shocked at what he had done, he called 911. They lived in a small town, and the emergency vehicle arrived 45 minutes later, too late to save her life. During that time, he listened to her calls for help, her pathetic struggle to understand, before she died.

It is hard to measure how such a death affects family and friends. This killing affected me in a number of ways. I was horrified and ashamed. I could not bring myself to talk about it to anyone except my psychiatrist – I couldn't let even my closest friends know. For months I experienced a weight on my chest, as though a huge rock was pressing out my breath.

No charges were brought against my father – the death was seen as a domestic quarrel. But my father was not unaffected – he slowly lost his mind, due to the combined effects of alcoholism and a guilty conscience. He spent his last seven years in a mental institution, and did not know even his children for the final few years.

We cannot prevent every drug-related shootout, every murder of a woman by the man who "owns her," every suicide, every mass killing. But when guns are so easily accessible, and so many deaths are occurring, we have to start somewhere.

I am asking you to do what you know is right – to face down the gun lobby, financed and controlled by the makers and sellers of weapons. To do so will require courage on your part, I understand that. But you were not elected to give in to whoever pushes the hardest. You were elected to lead. I'm asking you to change the practice of easy guns and needless deaths. Please support SB 1551!

www.marilynsewell.com
0841 SW Gaines St., #319
Portland, OR 97239



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

Charlie Hales, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner
Nick Fish, Commissioner
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner
Steve Novick, Commissioner

February 5, 2014

Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
900 Court St, NE, Hearing Room 343
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for SB 1551

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Public safety is a fundamental priority for the City of Portland and gun violence poses a serious threat to the health, safety, and well-being of our community. According to the Oregon Health Authority, in 2012 there were 442 deaths due to firearms in Oregon. Nationwide, more than 30,000 people are killed by firearms every year. Numerous mass casualties and tragic gun violence incidents have proliferated in recent history. Performing a background check with every gun sale is an easy and effective way to reduce gun violence by preventing dangerous weapons from falling into the hands of criminals and the dangerously mentally ill.

We acknowledge that extending background checks to private gun sales and transfers will not prevent all tragic instances of gun violence. However, reasonable reforms to our current firearm laws are a necessary component of the larger strategy to reduce gun violence. Requiring background checks for the private sale of firearms is one reasonable and prudent step Oregon can take right now to help keep guns out of the hands of those who would do harm to themselves or others.

In 2012, Oregon's current system – which covers sales by licensed dealers and at gun shows – blocked over 2,300 sales to individuals with criminal records. Extending this successful program to the private sale of firearms is a proven step we can take to reduce gun violence and improve public safety for all Oregonians.

We applaud the Legislature for taking up this important public health and safety issue, and we ask for your support.

Respectfully,

Charlie Hales
Mayor

Amanda Fritz
Commissioner

Nick Fish
Commissioner

Dan Saltzman
Commissioner

Steve Novick
Commissioner

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 1551. I am a social worker, mother and grandmother and live in Multnomah County. This bill would close some of the loopholes that make it easy for criminals to get a gun. It has been proven that states with mandatory background checks reduce the deaths of women and law enforcement officers by a large percentage. This law would do the same in OR, as well as reduce the numbers of firearms in the hands of felons, who would be detected by such checks. I urge you to pass this bill as a first step in reducing gun violence.

Catherine Spofford

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mary D. Stephens and I live and vote in Florence, Oregon.

I am very grateful that you are taking public testimony on closing the loop-hole in private gun sales. I support SB 1551 for many reasons. All law-abiding Oregonians are perfectly comfortable with accepting background checks for housing, driving, membership in many clubs and associations, etc. It is now time to simply face the fact that a background check on any and all instances involving the purchase of firearms should be a simple fact of modern life.

I urge you to do everything within your power to move this bill forward.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Mary D. Stephens
1365 Spruce Street (Apt. 216)
Florence, Oregon 97439

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joan Sunquest and I live in North Portland. As a grandmother of 3 school age children, I am increasingly concerned about the issue of gun safety in our community, our state and our nation. I believe passing SB1551 in this session of the Oregon legislature will be one of the important steps in keeping Oregonians safer. Universal background checks for gun sales will do a lot to reduce the number of guns which end up in the hands of people who should not have them. Closing the loopholes which enable anyone to buy any type of weapon online is just one of the many reasons I urge your support of SB1551.

Sincerely,
Joan Sunquest
8232 N Waylad Ave.
Portland, OR 97203

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nancy Trotic and I live in Portland, though I grew up in Albany. I am a lifelong Oregonian; in fact, my ancestors came here in 1852. I love this state, its history, its present, and its future. I love the Oregon Story and want to see my state continue to lead the way in creating the conditions for people to live freely, responsibly, and fearlessly.

This morning I am not sitting in front of you because I babysit daily for my two-month-old grandson, Troy. Although he only weighs 11 or 12 pounds, his life is the biggest reason I am asking you to support SB 1551, to close the background-check loophole for firearms purchases in Oregon.

I don't need to tell you that Oregon, like the rest of the U.S., faces a terrible problem of gun violence. We see it daily in the news, on the faces of people in unimaginable grief at the unnecessary death of a loved one. My heart is wrenched every time I see one of those faces and read one of those tragic stories. I fear for my loved ones. I think about this every day of my life.

The most important thing about SB 1551 is that it will REDUCE the number of grieving families, and might save the life of my grandson or someone else close to me.

We know that persons intent on homicidal violence and suicidal people who have enough determination to do so will sooner or later get their hands on a gun. But since universal background checks can DELAY a gun getting into the hands of such a person, delay could mean a death averted—if the criminal is caught or in the meantime diverted from his/her course of action, if the suicidal person calls a helpline, if a victim of domestic abuse has a chance to escape before her violent partner can come home with a gun. Some people will just come to their senses, get caught, or get help before it's too late.

Since Oregon already requires background checks at gun shops and gun shows, why shouldn't we do the same for sales off the Internet or the kitchen table? The burden of background checks is minimal, especially in comparison to lives saved, crime fought, and the commonsense idea that we shouldn't sell guns to people who are likely to commit violence. Those who say we shouldn't require checks for all sales (except between family members, as allowed for in the bill) should, logically, it seems, oppose background checks even at gun shops. Is this really what we want—that anyone with a history of severe mental illness, domestic abuse, previous criminal record--can buy a gun with no questions asked?

As you probably know, recent poll data show that 78 percent of Oregonians support universal background checks. Our Legislature should follow the people's lead on this commonsense, crime-fighting measure. Most responsible gun owners support it, too.

My heart and my head urge you in the strongest terms to support SB 1551. Thank you.

Nancy Trotic
3130 SE 73rd Ave.
Portland, OR 97206
503-775-9022
nancyt_pdx@yahoo.com

Thank you Mr.Reiley.

I wish to be on record as in support of SB 1551 for the following reasons.

Summary.

In Florence Oregon, population under 9000, there are three large chain stores selling firearms, as well as Gun Shops, a Gun Club and private sales.

Adults bring children to gun counters in Florence to choose their first gun as a birthday present to kill.

Data.

Gun Shot Wound, a medical diagnosis, injuries and deaths in OR is a Health Issue.

In OR, Gun Shot Wounds for children were 2.2/100,000, from Y2000 to Y2010.

Data shows increasing numbers of deaths of minors and adults in OR since Y2000,
The increase in suicides by Gun Shot Wound in OR includes all ages and both sexes.

The number of children in OR, from ages 5 to 17, that have their own gun, is increasing.

The number of suicide deaths of minors in OR, ages 10- 19 is increasing since 67 in 2004.

Gun Shot Wounds are the leading cause of Deaths of Minors aged 10-19.

Medical costs of Gun Shot Wound injuries for minors is estimated at \$14,000 per incident.

Behavioral Patterns.

Easily accessible fully loaded guns are considered normal behavior in many OR homes, particularly in rural counties. A loaded 'Gun Behind Every Door' is accepted as normal practice.

Concealed weapons carriers use "self defense" arguments for killing unarmed minors.

Response to Concealed Weapons.

Public Buildings are adding "No Weapons Allowed in Building" along with the "Hours of Business."

Small Businesses are adding metal detectors at doorways.

A. Jennifer Velinty
419 Sherwood Loop
Florence, OR 97439
541-997-7573

TO: Chair Floyd Prozanski, Vice chair Betsy Close, Senator michael Dembrow, Senator Jeff Kruse, and senator Arnie Robian

I have lived in Oregon for almost 45 years. I was born and grew up in Houston, where my father was professor of sociology at the University of Houston. He taught criminology for many years; members of state and municipal police forces were students. During all or most of the years he taught criminology (d.1964), Texas had the dubious honor of being at the top of world records in per capita murder rates by guns. By contrast, England was in low double digits. Who can doubt now or then that the gun culture and easy availability of guns played a large part in the statistics. Guns were relatively expensive then. And in the segregated south, poor blacks and hispanics had limited access to them.

Gun violence today is of an entirely different magnitude, given that a gun is “affordable” by almost anyone who is determined to have one. We have witnessed the awful consequence, most dramatically among troubled younger citizens. We can argue about cause and effect, but easy possession clearly is a central issue.

SB 1551 calls for a reasonable, sensible background check on private handgun sales. It helps set a baseline for what all responsible gun owners should want for public and private safety. This should not be a partisan issue, and any vote in principle along that line, rather than in consideration for public well being, foretells a devastating prospect for the future of our state and country.

I urge your support of SB 1551.

Sincerely,
Joella Werlin
620 SW Caruthers #278
Portland, OR 97201

Dear Sen. Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the 107,000 registered Democrats in Lane County to urge you to vote for Senate Bill 1551. Requiring background checks on all firearms purchasers is a popular and effective strategy to prevent incidents of gun violence. Furthermore, expanded background checks do not infringe in any way on the constitutional rights of law-abiding gun owners.

Expanded background checks are incredibly popular with Oregon voters. In a recent poll conducted by Public Policy Polling, 78 percent of respondents supported “requiring a criminal background check of every person who wants to buy a firearm.” In the same poll, 74 percent of respondents supported “prohibiting anyone convicted of stalking or subject to a restraining order for domestic violence from buying a gun;” the best way to keep guns out of the hands of these violent criminals is to require a background check of everyone who buys a gun in our state.

Expanded background checks are also effective. Colorado—a state with a similar demographic and political profile to our own—passed an expanded background checks bill in 2013. End of the year crime statistics from the Colorado Department of Public Safety show that 4,792 background checks were conducted between July, when the law went into effect, and the end of November. 98 percent of these background checks were conducted on law-abiding citizens, but 72 gun sales were blocked because the purchaser had been convicted of a serious crime—homicide, sexual assault, assault, dangerous drugs and larceny/theft—or was under a restraining order for domestic violence.

To put it simply, expanded background checks prevented six dozen violent criminals from accessing a firearm last year in Colorado.

I urge the members of this committee to for S.B. 1551 and implement this popular, effective and constitutional measure to prevent gun violence in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Chris Wig
Vice Chair
Democratic Party of Lane County

Wednesday, 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:

We strongly support background checks for all gun sales in the state of Oregon. The 'Background Checks Keep Guns Out of the Hands of Domestic Abusers' billboard sign correctly and clearly states how universal background checks reduce domestic violence firearm homicides. We as victim advocates have seen how guns are used within a domestic violence relationship as a tool for coercion and control. In this testimony, we have outlined a few of the ways we have seen DV perpetrators use guns within their pattern of abusive behaviors:

- Using intimidation: Abusers who keep 2 bullets with them at all times ("One for her head, one for his," as one survivor told us) to use as a threat whenever the survivor considered leaving or seeking help. The same abuser mentioned above would simply gesture toward the pocket where the bullets were stored as a threat toward the survivor when they were in public - she understood what he meant, but nobody else even noticed.
- Using children: showing guns to kids to remind them who is powerful in the relationship, teaching kids to shoot as a threat to the survivor, telling the survivor that the kids are at risk, leaving guns unlocked or unsecured when children are present as a threat to the survivor (or threaten to tell DHS that children are exposed to guns to have them removed).
- Sexual Abuse: using guns to force survivor to do sex acts without consent (One client recently described to me how her abuser/boyfriend forced her at gun point to perform

oral sex on another man, then used the incident to accuse her of cheating and as a trigger for physical assault.)

- Using Coercion & Threats: using guns to force survivors to do illegal things, including using the threat of gun violence to force survivors to register guns in her name (if he has a DV charge or other felony on his record).

One concern that came up was that since many DV survivors don't press charges or get Restraining Orders placed against their abuser, this law may not be a powerful tool for preventing firearm violence within domestic violence relationships. HOWEVER, the argument that a law is hard to enforce and therefore not worth enacting is an argument we are accustomed to hearing. Everyone in our movement knows that rape laws are hard to enforce and rape convictions are very difficult to achieve. Still, society needs a law against rape in order to communicate to potential rapists that we as a society find that behavior detestable.

Universal background checks are the same - certainly, there are plenty of illegal ways for DV perpetrators (and other criminals) to obtain guns. If we refuse to enact a law that requires universal background checks (and helps to prohibit DV perpetrators from owning guns) simply because it's hard to enforce, we are telling DV perpetrators that the crimes they commit with guns are not important enough to warrant legislation.

We hope these thoughts are helpful in the debate regarding SB 1551. The staff at HAVEN urge all senators to vote for safety for Oregon families and pass SB 1551 during this short session.

Respectfully submitted by:
Anna Williams, Program Manager

HAVEN, P.O. Box 576
The Dalles, OR 97058
office: 541.296.1662
cell: 541.980.5857

Chair Prozanski, and Members of the Panel:

My name is Patricia Williams, and I live here in Salem. Thank you for holding a hearing and listening to constituents on SB 1551 last Thursday. I would like to submit my testimony:

I am in favor of expanding background checks to private gun sales and in closing that loophole that criminals can slip through.

Opponents to this bill will offer three major arguments:

- 1.) "It will inconvenience law-abiding citizens."

We all, law-abiding citizens, are inconvenienced in a variety of ways throughout our daily lives. We need to prove we have insurance. We need to record our income for tax purposes. We need to establish our identity in order to vote or drive a car, and we need to go through security checks at the airport. Our opponents must be incredible delicate flowers to complain about their "inconvenience."

- 2.) "Why don't they prosecute those who have attempted to buy firearms and been turned away?"

No one would argue that they have a point there. In fact, the amendments in front of you will take care of their concerns. I hope that the amendments will allow prosecutors and district attorneys some leeway in choosing cases to prosecute, however, since law enforcement offices across the state are on tight budgets.

- 3.) "It will be ineffective. Criminals will always get guns."

I call these arguments the "Big Give-Upsy" arguments. This is the main NRA argument. Really, if you ask them if background checks for sales at gun dealers and gun shows are effective, they have to admit that they are. True, some criminals will manage to get guns -- but right now, the NRA and their supporters are making it easy-peasy for criminals and domestic abusers to get their hands on guns through private sales. We can't let the quest for the perfect become the enemy of the good. What we need to do now is Start.

Thank you,

Patricia Williams

4643 19th Ct. S.

Salem, OR 97302

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1551

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

My name is Dick Willis; I live in southwest Portland. I write in support of SB 1551.

I don't own a gun... never have, never will.

But I did shoot a man once.

And then I apologized to him for having made a horrendous mistake.

At the time, I was a member of a well-regulated militia: the United States Army. And I was operating under justifiably chaotic circumstances: a firefight during the first night of Tet in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. We were overrun by a far superior North Vietnam force. On that moonless night our entire compound was lit up by tracers flying everywhere.

But in all that chaos I knew exactly what I was doing: I saw a man in our wire where none of our people should have been. I even confirmed that the man I saw couldn't be one of ours.

So I took sure aim, and fired.

And after we had repulsed the NVA, I took the soldier—a member of my own platoon as it turned out—to a MASH unit and watched why the bullet was removed and his body repaired. And when he came out of the anesthesia six hours later I was there to apologize to him for what I had done to him.

What I learned that night was that it's soooo easy to pull a trigger. **Any fool can do it.**

And that's why I'm writing to you. I still find myself in dicey situations from time to time. I am a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) in Multnomah County, and in one of my current cases I'm dealing with a convicted felon with serious anger issues, who was found in possession of a pistol. (You can find details in the December 20, 2012 [article](#) in oregonlive.com titled "Father of 11-year-old accused in carjacking case will face federal weapons charge".)

So, as an unarmed and defenseless—but publically active—citizen I am asking that you do whatever you can to ensure that I don't have to face anyone who should not possess a gun.

SB 1551 is an important step in that direction.

Thank you,
Dick Willis
Portland, OR

I URGE STRONGEST SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 1551. Better checks on gun purchase will NOT threaten Second Amendment rights and WILL help to prevent gun accidents and gun crime. Jane Willsea



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

February 6, 2014

To: Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Members of the Committee

Re: SB 1551 Criminal Background Checks before Transfer of Firearms—SUPPORT

The League is a non-partisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed citizen participation in government. We support SB 1551, based on our national gun safety position, which states in part that “the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens.” Oregon’s current background check law has been effective, but it needs to be strengthened, particularly in the area of online sales, which allow far too many firearms to end up in the wrong hands.

Of course, no single law can prevent all gun violence. However, the body of evidence from states where similar laws exist is irrefutable. Universal background checks do save lives—the lives of crime victims, the lives of domestic abuse victims, the lives of children who are shot accidentally, the lives of bystanders in mass shootings, and the lives of those contemplating suicide.

The League is a well-known supporter of citizen rights as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. However, SB 1551 in no way infringes on the rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms, as guaranteed by the 2nd Amendment. By prohibiting the transfer of firearms to criminals and the seriously mental ill, it acknowledges the rights of all citizens to be free from violence, as well as government’s responsibility to insure the health and safety of its citizens.

The crisis of gun violence will not cure itself as long as gaping holes exist in current law. Delay will inevitably cost lives. The League, a proud member of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Gun Violence, strongly urges a yes vote on SB 1551 this session. Eighty percent of Oregonians are asking legislators to put partisan politics aside and do the right thing to ensure a healthier and safer state.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Robin Wisdom in cursive script.

Robin Wisdom
President

Handwritten signature of Marge Easley in cursive script.

Marge Easley
Past President