



SB 941: Expanded Background Checks for Gun Sales
Testimony of Michelle Ganow-Jones, Executive Director, Oregon NOW
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My name is Michelle Ganow-Jones, and I'm Executive Director of Oregon NOW, the state chapter of the National Organization for Women. I am pleased to be here today to urge your support for SB 941: Expanded Background Checks for Gun Sales. By passing this bill, you will be saving women's lives.

Between 2003 and 2007, there were 207 Oregonians killed in domestic violence incidents, and 60 percent of these victims died from gunshot wounds.¹ Closing the background check loophole certainly would lower this figure. According to FBI data, states with background checks for all gun sales have 38 percent fewer domestic violence firearm homicides.²

Unlike in our neighboring states of Washington and California, sales of guns by private parties in Oregon do not require a background check that could keep guns out of the hands of felons and domestic abusers. Yet we know that background checks work for sales at gun shows or through licensed gun dealers: In 2013, background checks stopped the sale of guns in 80 instances where the purchaser had a domestic violence conviction and in 50 cases where a restraining order was present.³

It only makes sense that the same rules should apply to all gun sales, no matter the point of purchase. And that's why there's such strong public support for this change in policy, with eighty-one percent of Oregonians in favor of universal background checks on all gun sales.⁴

Some may argue that passing this law won't keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals who are determined to find any way to obtain a firearm. While that may be true in some cases, such laws clearly act as a deterrent, and the statistics speak for themselves: 38 percent fewer domestic violence firearm homicides in states with universal background checks.

Passing this law will keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. Passing this law will save women's lives. Thank you for your support for this important piece of legislation.

¹ Oregon Public Health Division, 2012

² FBI Supplementary Homicide Report and Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2010

³ Oregon State Police, Preliminary 2013 data obtained on January 2, 2014

⁴ Elway Research, 2013