



DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LANE COUNTY

224 East 11th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon 97401
(541) 484-6099

April 1, 2015

Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
900 Court Street Northeast
Salem, Oregon 97401

Dear Senator Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the 86,490 registered Democrats in Lane County to urge you to vote Yes on Senate Bill 941. 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 Benson Strategy Group, 87 percent of respondents supported “support background checks on all gun purchases,” including 83 percent of gun owners. In a poll conducted last year by Public Policy Polling, 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 vote Yes on Senate Bill 941 and implement this popular, effective and constitutional measure to prevent gun violence in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Chris Wig
Chair
Democratic Party of Lane County