



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON

April 8, 2015

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Sen. Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Members of the Committee
sjud.exhibits@state.or.us

RE: SB 170, Firearm safety courses in schools: OPPOSE


The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed citizen participation in government. We oppose SB 170, which would require firearm safety courses in all public elementary, secondary, and charter schools, from kindergarten through grade 12. We believe this requirement places an undue burden on local school districts and is not in keeping with League positions on children at risk and educational fiscal policy.


The League supports programs that promote the well-being, encourage the full development, and ensure the safety of all children. We agree that children should be taught basic safety skills related to guns, such as those promoted by the ASK Campaign, sponsored by Ceasefire Oregon. This includes what the proper response should be when a child sees a firearm. However, they do not include “instruction in the appearance and workings of firearms” and the “opportunity to handle an unloaded firearm,” which are requirements in this bill. We can foresee that many parents would object to this course and to their children handling weapons of any kind.

It is our opinion that this bill represents an unfunded mandate by adding to the already-crowded school curriculum and by requiring the hiring of firearm safety instructors. Given the current budget constraints, concerns over Oregon’s academic achievement ranking, and the shortened hours of instruction in the school year, we believe SB 170 would prove very difficult to fund and implement.

The League strongly urges a “no” vote on SB 170.

Sincerely,


Robin Wisdom
LWVOR President


Marge Easley
LWVOR Action Committee