

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Rebekah McKinley. I am a high school senior and my Senator, Brian Boquist, recently introduced a bill, Senate Bill 170, based on an idea I had. Senate Bill 170 is currently under your committee's consideration, and I would like to provide information that I believe will assist you as you consider this bill.

Here is the background story on Senate Bill 170. I attended Girls State, a civics and leadership program hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary each June. While there, I wrote the original version of this bill, which is meant to be completely neutral (not pro- or anti-gun) and non-partisan.

The goal of the bill was to bring gun safety education into schools, where we have unfortunately seen many tragedies involving guns. Essentially, the bill entailed having police officers, members of the armed forces, veterans, or other gun safety experts go into K-12 schools and teach students in a safe, completely neutral environment what to do if they see a gun or someone misusing one. The bill had a great deal of popular support among the other Girls State delegates and was one of the four that passed both the Girls State Senate and House, out of dozens.

Last spring, I attended another government/civics class called TeenPact, held each year at the State Capitol. I brought the same bill there as well. As part of the class, we wrote to our State Senators and Representatives. I included information about my bill in my letter. My Senator, Brian Boquist, wrote back and said he was interested in learning more about my bill and possibly taking it to the legislature. The version of the bill now at the Oregon Senate is almost exactly the same as my original bill.

Two newspapers have written about the bill: the World Link in Coos Bay and the Oregonian. Links to the articles are below.

- http://theworldlink.com/news/opinion/editorial/education-responsibility-it-s-that-simple/article_974a613a-6546-59f7-bd23-b1ff099c7eca.html
- http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2015/03/unloaded_guns_in_kindergarten.html

The primary reason I wrote this bill was to hopefully help prevent some of the tragedies we hear about on the news, where young people are fascinated with guns, somehow acquire one, and misuse it.

I believe that if we help students understand what guns are, what to do if they see one or someone misusing one, and build relationships with police and/or other gun safety instructors in the local community, all in a safe, positive, realistic, and well-supervised environment, students are less likely to be paralyzed by the sight of guns or have an unhealthy fascination with them, which could cause them to get in trouble at some point.

The ultimate goal behind Senate Bill 170 is to empower students, help them become confident in knowing what to do in an emergency involving guns, encourage them to ask questions they

may have about guns or gun safety, and help them to have healthy views of both police and gun safety, regardless of individual views on gun ownership.

I sincerely hope this information will be helpful to you as you consider Senate Bill 170; if you have any questions I will be happy to answer those as well.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebekah McKinley