

The main purpose of having a loaded firearm in the home is self - protection and this purpose is almost completely thwarted by having it locked up or unloaded. The criminal breaking into your house in the middle of the night is not going to wait for you to go get the key to unlock your gun or wait for you to load it.

Accidents, sometimes terrible accidents, happen if a child finds a loaded firearm. Part of what's contributing to this are schools becoming gun free zones and adopting a "zero tolerance" policy toward guns that includes miniature plastic toy guns and a PopTart or sandwich that might resemble a gun. These ridiculous extreme measures create a taboo that only inflates what would otherwise be normal curiosity more easily addressed by reasonable familiarity and instruction.

I grew up in a house with loaded guns. We were instructed by my father as to their proper use and he took us out to the firing range to use them under close supervision and control. Because of this instruction, we never even considered "playing" with them, just as we never considered "playing" with my mother's kitchen knives or my dad's hunting and fishing knives.

If the Oregon legislature is so concerned for children, then why aren't they investigating prescription drug misuse by children? Why aren't they making it mandatory for parents to lock up their pharmaceuticals? After all, 48% of US consumers use pharmaceuticals, with 11% using five or more at a time. 100,000 people, many of whom are children, die every year from properly prescribed and administered pharmaceuticals, and that doesn't even count the accidental deaths from misuse. Doctor/hospital caused deaths number 400,000 annually. Where's the panicked legislation over that?!

Current statistics say 10,000 children under the age of 20 are killed each year as a result of firearm use. What this statistic does NOT reflect is how many of those were actually accidental and how many are the result of criminal activity such as gang shootings. (Who, by the way, sill NEVER be screened out by "universal background checks".) The actual number of household firearm accidents involving child deaths comes in at somewhere around 100 annually nationwide, (that's 2 per state per year) whereas motor vehicle accidents are by far the LEADING cause of death to children 2-14 years of age - an astounding 60 million. And we need a criminalizing law for 2?!

This legislature is NOT about protecting children. It is about effectually disarming otherwise law-abiding people and making them a new criminal class; and at a time when law enforcement/community protection services are dwindling. Leaving the population defenseless is criminal.

Parents who lose children to tragic gun accidents pay a heavy enough price. They don't need the State of Oregon giving them a criminal record on top of that!

Sincerely,
Jo Dhooghe
Dallas, OR