



Deborah Kafoury Multnomah County Chair

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Chair Prozanski and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

Senate Bill 945 will protect Oregon's children by encouraging responsible gun ownership. As an elected official, as a mother and community member, I ask you to pass a law that will reduce accidental shootings, suicides and murders.

In December 2012, 20 first-graders and six elementary school staff were killed with a Bushmaster AR-15 rifle in Connecticut. As I watched the news on TV nearly 3,000 miles away, I just kept thinking about my little girl. She was in first-grade, too.

Three days earlier at the Clackamas Town Center, 22-year-old Jacob Tyler Roberts walked in carrying an AR-15. He killed two people before turning the gun on himself.

Four months later, our Board of County Commissioners passed legislation to require adults in Multnomah County to keep their guns out of the hands of kids.

And still, on a mild June morning last year, a 15-year-old brought his brother's AR-15 to Reynolds High School in Troutdale and began firing, killing a fellow student and then himself.

Six months later in December, four teens at Rosemary Anderson High, in Portland, were hit with bullets from a Ruger 9mm semi-automatic handgun. Four young men have been charged in that assault; one is 16 years old.

I support this bill because we can -- and must -- do more.

Violence prevention is a public health issue. We protect our children from car accidents, from tobacco and nicotine, and as lawmakers it is our responsibility to protect them from the rampant gun violence that continues to increase in this country.

The presence of unlocked guns in the home increases the risk of both unintentional gun injuries and intentional shootings. In states where child access laws have been in effect for at least one year, unintentional firearm deaths fell by 23% among children under 15 years of age, an 8.3% decrease in suicides among 14-17 years old.

Twenty eight states and D.C. have enacted child access prevention laws. We have done all we can at the County level, and now we need state and federal action. Please pass Senate bill 945 - it is common sense firearm legislation for Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Kafoury". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Deborah Kafoury

Chair