

Chair Prozanski, Members of the Committee:

My name is Roberta Robles. I am a resident of Northeast Portland, a small business owner and mother of two. I enjoy target shooting at a firing range with friends and grew up hunting and eating venison and elk on the Oregon Coast. I'm a pretty good shot. Today I'm here to speak in support of Senate Bill 945, with the goal of protecting children from access to guns.

I'm here today because on Thanksgiving Day 2012, my perspective on guns in the home changed forever. Our multi-family Thanksgiving celebration occurs each year here in Salem, not far from the Capitol, with several families coming from across Oregon. The most contentious part of our Thanksgiving dinner used to be the fight over who makes the best cranberry sauce.

But on that day in 2012, everything changed. My 18-month-old son was having his diaper changed on the floor next to his grandmother's bed. The next thing we knew, he had his hands on a loaded handgun **stored under the bed**. An 18-month-old who could barely walk holding a loaded gun is the worst nightmare you could imagine.

My rage was immediate and overwhelming, and directed solely at my family member who left a gun unlocked and loaded in a house full of more than half a dozen young cousins and neighbor children. Really, "rage" is not a strong enough word to describe the feeling a mother has when her child is that close death.

This accident tore my family apart for some time. But today, we have established clear rules in our homes for gun storage, and have come back together stronger and safer. I believe no family should have to endure what we did to ensure our children are protected from accessing guns accidentally. A gun-safe community needs to be the law of the land.

In the event that a child gets access to a gun, regardless as to whether an injury occurred, there should be repercussions. Passing Senate Bill 945 sets the ground rules for gun safety in Oregon, and is another step toward safer homes and communities.

Thank you for your time.

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