

April 15, 2015

**Testimony from the Portland Commanding Officers Association in Support of Senate Bill 945 (2015)**

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The Portland Police Commanding Officers Association (PPCOA) encourages passage of Senate Bill 945, legislation designed to protect our children in Oregon by establishing criminal liability when an adult allows a child unintended access to a firearm.

As law enforcement agents, we are fully dedicated to protecting the vulnerable and encouraging policies that advance public safety. Senate Bill 945 will help police officers and other public safety officers by setting an important legal precedent for the safe storage of firearms.

Children in Oregon and throughout the nation are killed every year due to accidental access to a firearm. Many of these deaths happen when children are in their own homes, unsupervised, and playing with a gun. By making it a crime to endanger a child by allowing access to an unlocked or unsecured firearm without a parent or guardian's consent, SB 945 would help address this heart wrenching circumstance.

We know that no parent wishes harm upon their child and that circumstances of accidental firearm deaths are unparalleled tragedies. Yet, doing nothing is hardly a solution. Instead, we must set reasonable expectations for the storage of firearms to save the lives of our precious children. By passing legislation that requires safe storage, we will deter individuals from making irresponsible choices and remind all parents that they have a tremendous obligation to keep their children safe from harm and accidental danger.

Lastly, this legislation does not discourage minors from learning about firearms and using them with adult supervision. Families who enroll their children in gun safety classes, or take their children hunting or target shooting would still be able to do so. Parents could still decide when their children are old enough to safely handle a firearm without supervision and no one would wish to infringe upon this personal choice.

As law enforcement agents and proud Americans, we encourage the passage of Senate Bill 945. Our children deserve to live in the best world we can provide and their safety must remain our number one priority.

Sincerely,



Wendi Steinbronn