

To: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Sarah Finger McDonald, Corvallis, OR

RE: Testimony in favor of SB 945

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

My name is Sarah Finger McDonald. I am a resident of Corvallis and the mother of two children, ages 10 and 5. I am writing in support of SB 945.

Preventing child access to firearms is the responsibility of adults. My children have been taught about gun safety and have been told that if they ever find a gun they should not touch it, they should leave the area, and tell an adult. But I know kids. I know they are impulsive and curious. I know that they often do things they have been told not to, not because they are bad but because they are young. They are children.

SB 945 will make it a crime to endanger a child by allowing them access to a firearm. This bill will make it adults' responsibility to keep children safe. It puts the responsibility for child safety where it should be, in adult hands.

Firearm safety information often includes a recommendation that guns be stored in a securely-locked location in homes with children^{1, 2, 3}. SB 945 only requires that gun owners follow the recommendations of gun safety instructors and protect children.

States where child access prevention laws have been enacted have seen a 23% reduction in unintentional gunshot deaths among children under age 15⁴. Safe storage of firearms is a protective measure that reduces youth suicide⁵. In 2006 suicide was the second leading cause of death among Oregonians aged 10 to 24 and firearms were the mechanism in 56% of youth suicides⁶. If requiring gun owners to follow the safety measures they are taught in training and lock up their guns saves children's lives, that requirement should be law.

SB 945 will save children's lives by requiring adults to be responsible and allowing children to be children.

¹The Smart Parent's Guide to Gun Safety. Ammo.net. (2015). Retrieved April 15, 2015.

²A Parent's Guide to Gun Safety in the Home. TheGunBox.com. (2013). Retrieved April 15, 2015.

³Gun Safety for Children: Information for Parents. Paladin Services (2015). Retrieved April 15, 2015.

⁴The Truth About Kids & Guns, Brady Campaign to End Gun Violence, Oct. 2014.

⁵David C. Grossman, et al., Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries, 293 JAMA 707, 711-13 (Feb.2005).

⁶Oregon Youth Suicide Facts. Oregon Health Division, Injury Prevention & Epidemiology Program. (2008). Retrieved April 15, 2015.