

My name is Marilyn Stubbs. I live in Portland, Oregon.

I was 5 years old when my 4-yr. old neighbor came outside carrying his policeman father's gun which was placed on top of the refrigerator to keep it safe. A chair and the kitchen counter was all Bobby needed to take the gun from its safe location. No shots were fired. But caring adults made sure us children learned to feel very afraid of guns.

When I was 24 and had my first professional job, I went to a farmhouse to do a child welfare check. As soon as I asked to see the children, I found myself being chased across the barnyard by a very angry man with a shotgun. I did not get shot. Remembering still makes me feel anxious.

When I was 38 I entered my local Fred Meyer store to see clerks and customers peering out behind counters after two young thieves with guns had broken glass and stolen some jewelry. The police arrived. No one was shot. Everyone was scared.

In my mid-50s, I served on a jury for a case where a teenage male was murdered by his friend in his early 20s. The jaw-dropping thing I learned from that jury service was that stolen guns are easy to get and are abundant in the very parks I had been enjoying for fun and exercise. I still walk in those same parks but I will never again feel as safe.

None of these people had been background checked—not my 4-yr. old neighbor, nor the father committing welfare fraud, nor the young men involved in that gang-related murder, and probably not the thieves at my Fred Meyer store.

Now I am 75 and I'm tired of being scared. Statistics show that when universal background checks are the law, murder, suicides and even accidental deaths are decreased. Without looking too hard, I can think of a few people I hope would be subjected to a background check if they were to try to buy a gun: paranoid elderly relatives, a young mother who flies into violent rages, a pre-adolescent who self-abuses.

Please pass Senate Bill 941 out of this committee and onto the floor of the House. Background checks need to be required by law.