



Tuesday, May 12, 2015

Senate Committee on Rules
Sen. Diane Rosenbaum, Chair
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Support of SB 525 by the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, urges your support of Senate Bill 525 with the -4 amendments, which would codify federal law prohibiting the possession of firearms by certain domestic violence abusers, and provide Oregon law enforcement and prosecutors with authority to implement the federal protections..

The Oregon Coalition represents 47 of the state's 56 domestic and sexual violence community organizations, and works extensively with the rest. It is these organizations and their partners that work to keep victims safe, and support surviving family members in the event of the worst outcome.

In Oregon in any given year, approximately 60 percent of domestic violence deaths result from the use of a firearm. OCADSV's experience serving on the Oregon Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team, managing crisis response, and speaking with community programs indicates that this final act is almost always preceded by a pattern of abuse that is severe enough to leave imprints in the local community.

A firearm is a tool that domestic violence perpetrators utilize to increase power and control over their victims. In the hands of domestic violence perpetrators, firearms are employed to intimidate, punish, threaten, and end the lives of their chosen victims, and sometimes themselves.

From 2003 through 2014, at least 220 people were killed in our state in this manner. Abusers often fear loss of control and escalate their abuse when victims take court action.

Firearms escalate the severity and increase the ease of exercising power and control in abusive relationships. Prohibiting the abuser from possessing a firearm and ammunition following the granting of a restraining order after a hearing, or after a conviction will protect victims and their children.

On behalf of these programs and advocates, I urge you to increase the safety of domestic violence victims and their family members through passage of Senate Bill 525-4.