

May 30, 2015  
To: House Judiciary Committee  
Support for SB 525B

From: John Santa MD MPH  
745 NW 90<sup>th</sup> Place  
Portland, Oregon 97229

Chair Barker, Co-Chairs Olson and Williamson, Members of the Committee:

I am John Santa MD MPH. I have retired from clinical practice and now do administrative work around a variety of health care issues. I am writing to express my support for SB 525B, which would codify in Oregon law the federal firearms prohibitions applicable to adjudicated domestic violence offenders.

It is well-documented that firearms and domestic violence are a dangerous combination. In my practice one of the most difficult situations to manage was domestic violence. Partners who use the threat of violence are unpredictable, impulsive, willing to violate usual relationship boundaries. In many cases they use the threat of firearm violence to manipulate their partner. And sadly, because of their impulsivity they fulfill their threat. Approximately 28 deaths due to domestic violence occur every year in Oregon, and more than 60% of those fatalities are by gun.

Federal law has long prohibited possession of firearms by domestic violence perpetrators subject to a restraining order that has been upheld after a hearing, or convicted of a misdemeanor domestic violence offense. But without a parallel state law, enforcement and implementation of these protections is virtually impossible. Such a state law will reduce the odds that perpetrators will take the life of their partner, their children and their own life.

Oregon should join other states in taking steps to ensure the safety of our most vulnerable citizens. Passage of SB 525B will ensure that Oregon law enforcement agencies and district attorneys will have important tools to protect vulnerable victims from lethal domestic violence. Studies show that local implementation of these protections helps to reduce domestic violence fatalities.

We urge your support of this important bill to protect victims, their children, and our communities. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

John Santa MD MPH