

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

I am Megan Kovacs of Raphael House of Portland, a multi-faceted domestic violence agency addressing the causes and effects of intimate partner violence dedicated to ending it for good. 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. There are approximately 28 deaths due to domestic violence every year in Oregon, and more than 60% of those fatalities are by gun. We know that the risk for fatality when someone is perpetrating domestic violence increases 500 percent when that person owns a 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.

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,
Megan Kovacs

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