

From the desk of  
Senator Elizabeth  
Steiner Hayward

## **Please Support Senate Bill 941**

Distinguished Members of the Oregon State Senate,

My name is Lou Jaffe, I am a Portland resident and a Vietnam Veteran.

Within the first few weeks of basic training, I was taught how important but dangerous guns can be. From our first day on the firing range, to my last day in the uniform, guns played a central role in almost every aspect of military life. I have fired almost every gun in the United States Army arsenal. They're not toys, and I know that they should not be handled by dangerous individuals.

The Second Amendment gives every citizen of this country the right to keep and bear arms. I agree with that, and I fought to protect it. But with the right to bear arms, comes responsibility.

This week, the Oregon State Senate will consider Senate Bill 941, a bill that will make sure all gun sales are subject to a background check – not just some. Currently, sales at gun stores and gun shows are already covered under Oregon and federal firearms laws, but there is a loophole that allows online and other unlicensed sales to happen with no check whatsoever. If we're trying to stop dangerous people from getting guns, it makes no sense having two sets of rules for when background checks are required.

Additionally, background checks work: In states that expanded background checks on handgun sales, there are 46% fewer gun homicides of women by intimate partners, 48% fewer firearm suicides, and 48% fewer law enforcement gun deaths.

So it's not a surprise that this bill is overwhelmingly popular: Over 87% of Oregonians support universal background checks, including 83% of all gun owners.

Of course, no single law - even one as commonsense as background checks - will prevent every act of gun violence. It's too complicated a problem. But we can reduce the rate of gun violence and save lives. That sounds like a responsible idea to me, and one worth an honest, reasonable conversation among folks who want to make our community safer.

I hope the elected officials in Salem listen to the overwhelming majority of Oregonians who support this effort and pass Senate Bill 941.

It can save lives.

**Lou Jaffe**  
**Vietnam Veteran**  
**1LT US Army**