



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

February 3, 2016

To: House Committee on Judiciary
Representative Jeff Barker, Chair

Email: hjud.exhibits@state.or.us

Re: HB 4147, Relating to firearm transfer criminal background checks: SUPPORT

The League of Women Voters is a 95-year-old grassroots, nonpartisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. Our positions on gun safety and violence prevention inform our belief that it is the responsibility of government to enact and enforce public safety legislation such as firearm background checks. In 2015, we testified in support of SB 941, and this session we strongly support HB 4147 as a logical step forward to make Oregon's background check system work more fairly and effectively by eliminating the "default proceed" provision.

The Oregon State Police Firearms Instant Check System (FICS) works very efficiently the vast majority of time. OSP records indicate that 94% of background checks are approved within minutes of initiation, which is actually better than the 91% average of the National Instant Background Check System. However, there are instances where confirmation may be delayed due to times of high volume, out-of-state delays, or simple human error in the processing procedure. We firmly believe that the default is these situations should not be to grant automatic approval after three days. Concern for public safety dictates that the default should be to err on the side of caution and wait for a determination of whether a person is qualified or disqualified to receive a firearm.

Gun violence is a serious issue in our society today. For firearm background check laws to work as they should, we must eliminate loopholes such as the three-day default, which do not serve the public interest and weaken the effectiveness of existing law. The League urges passage of HB 4147.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

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Gun Safety Portfolio