

Thank you Chairman Barker and other committee members for the opportunity to speak, and share my story here today.

My name is Paul Kemp. I am here to speak on behalf of my sister Carla, and her late husband, Steve Forsyth, who was murdered with a shot to the back of his head at the Clackamas Town Center Mall on December 11th, 2012, by a gunman armed with a Stag-15 rifle and 150 rounds of ammunition.

This is not my first time testifying here in Oregon's State Capitol. I testified multiple times last year in support of **SB 941**, a bill that closed the private sale loophole.

I'm a gun owner and a hunter and I was proud to be an Oregonian when the legislature did the right thing and passed gun violence prevention legislation that we know will prevent dangerous people from getting guns. You will now have the chance to further strengthen the background checks system and help save lives by supporting bill **HB 4147**.

In Oregon, background checks are now required on all gun sales. This is a huge step forward for public safety—we know that states with background checks on unlicensed sales 46% fewer women are shot to death by intimate partners and 48% fewer law Enforcement officers are killed with handguns. But there are steps you can take to make the background checks system even stronger.

These steps we must take are twofold.

First, we must ensure that in cases where dangerous people try to break the law and buy guns but are denied because they fail a background check, local law enforcement is alerted so they can follow up to investigate or make an arrest. The proposed legislation would require the state police to alert local law enforcement when a prohibited person tries and fails to buy a gun – providing law enforcement with the information to arrest dangerous people before they can get a gun somewhere else.

Secondly, we must close what's called the "Charleston loophole," which allows a gun sale to proceed after three business days, even if the background check is incomplete. It's exactly how the Charleston shooter got his gun and used it to take the lives of nine innocent church-goers this past summer.

As I mentioned, I'm a gun owner and a hunter and I've taken a background check every time I've purchased a gun. I know that background checks are quick and easy. Most background checks are finished right on the spot in less than 5 minutes. But I actually once saw a man's background check come back as 'pending.' While purchasing a handgun for myself at a gun dealer in Beaverton, I overheard a conversation between a gun dealer and a buyer. When the background check came back 'pending', the gun dealer told the buyer that his background check was still being completed, and that he would not be able to sell him the gun until it was complete. I can only hope that if that man came back to the store after 3 days, the dealer would have continued to act responsibly and not given him the gun.

But at that point, if that dealer wanted to, he could sell the gun even though Oregon

State Police were still determining whether the man was a felon or a domestic abuser or other dangerous person.

We can hope that gun dealers will be responsible, and we know that many, including Walmart, do the right thing and wait for all background checks to come back finished before selling a gun. However, we also know that without a law on the books, some gun sellers will proceed with the sale even if the background check is incomplete.

We know that because of stories like Reverend Sharon Risher's, who I had the honor to meet last fall shortly after the Charleston shooting and again today. Her mother and eight other Americans might still be alive today if this flaw in the background checks system that allows gun sales to proceed with incomplete background checks had not have been in place.

The proposed legislation in HB 4147 would fix this deadly flaw.

Reverend Risher's tragic story reminds me too much of my own. Like the Reverend's mother, my brother was man who left a huge imprint on the world and whose legacy and memories live on every day. Steve was a good man, a loving husband, a caring dad who made time to coach basketball and football. My last memory of Steve was a 16<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for my son. It was a magical celebration and when I look back at the photos from that evening, there is such joy on our faces.

Because of a dangerous man with a gun, Steve, like too many other Americans, was murdered. My sister Carla, her son Alex and daughter Katie have to live with Steve's senseless murder **forever!**

We know there's no one thing you can do to prevent every act of gun violence. But you have the power to prevent more tragedies and to save lives. I urge you to support bill **HB 4147**.

Thank you.