



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

April 13, 2017

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair

Re: SB 797, Closing Loopholes in Oregon's Gun Safety Laws – **Support**

The League of Women Voters believes it is the responsibility of government to enact and enforce public safety legislation, which includes firearm background checks. We testified in support of SB 941 in 2015, and today we urge passage of SB 797, which provides for logical steps to close loopholes to make Oregon's background check system and domestic violence protection system work more fairly and effectively.

First, we support the removal of the so-called "Charleston Loophole" from Oregon statute. The Oregon State Police Firearms Instant Check System (FICS) works efficiently the vast majority of time. OSP records indicate that 94% of background checks are approved within minutes of initiation. 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 in these situations should not be to grant automatic approval after three days, as is allowed in current law. 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.

Secondly, we support the provision that ensures that law enforcement officials are notified when criminals try and fail to purchase guns illegally through the background check system. This will eliminate the loophole that currently exists, whereby follow-up does not occur when prohibited individuals attempt to obtain a firearm. If background checks are to work properly, there must be penalties for trying to illegally obtain a firearm. We also feel it is important for law enforcement officials to alert probation officials and the court, in the case of protective orders, so a record of illegal activity exists.

Lastly, we support the provision that prohibits gun possession by abusive dating partners and stalkers. This closes the loophole in current law that does not cover all forms of domestic partnerships when misdemeanor stalking charges have been filed in cases of domestic abuse. The importance of this issue becomes clear when looking at statistics from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. In 2013, 34 Oregonians were killed in 26 separate domestic violence incidents; 27 victims and 7 perpetrators were killed, and another 9 victims survived murder attempts, including a child under the age of 6. Guns were used in the majority of these incidents.

The League believes that these three provisions make important and necessary changes to current law. We strongly urge a “yes” vote on SB 797. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Norman Turrill
LWVOR President



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