

Twenty two years ago my sister in law and three nieces (6, 3, and 6 months) were shot at point blank range by her husband/their father in rural Oregon. The murders occurred on my eldest niece's first day of Kindergarten. My brother in law easily purchased the shotgun that morning even though there was a restraining order against him. I believe that my brother in law was acting impulsively and from a place of great anger and pain. I also believe that, had there been common sense checks slowing down his impulsive purchase, I might be celebrating my nieces' birthdays today.

In the years since my family was killed, Oregon has passed legislation requiring background checks which might have prevented our loss. Our state (and country), however, have a long way to go to make sure that guns are not accessible to those who wish to turn them on humans. The reality is that easy access to guns without adequate screening is a dangerous combination. In an average month in America 50 women are shot to death by a current or former partner.

No empathic person wants their neighbors or family members to suffer at the hands of mental illness, abuse, or guns. We don't, however, have control over what we or our loved ones will face. Even still, we do have the opportunity to act sensibly to create a system where individuals who have a criminal history such as stalking or domestic violence, regardless of marital status, or who have not passed their required background check in 3 days (the vast majority of which are passed instantly) cannot purchase a gun. We can also implement an active alert system wherein law enforcement is informed when a criminal attempts to purchase a gun illegally. All of these provisions are addressed in Senate Bill 797.

I implore all of our Oregon Representatives and Senators to care for the welfare of our population by passing SB 797. Toward that end I have added my voice, energy, and time to the important work of Moms Demand Action, an organization which is working to inform all people about the many emotional, financial, relational, and public health effects of gun violence while also promoting gun safety. Whether working with such a group or on one's own I hope that we will all join together to pass common sense gun laws in our wonderful and unique state. Senate Bill 797 will keep guns out of the hands of abusers and save the lives of spouses, partners, and children in Oregon. This is more than a worthy goal, it is a crucial one. Politics should never be more important than people. because of the mass murder within my own family, i will never be able to stop pushing to make people safer. politics aside, common sense gun safety regulations save people.

Doreen Dodgen Magee
Tualatin
Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense