



March 17, 2017

Dear Senator Prozanski and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of local chapters and members of the National Organization for Women (NOW) from across Oregon, we respectfully request your support for SB 797 and SB 868, two important pieces of legislation that address the nexus of guns and domestic abuse. As the grassroots arm of the women's movement, NOW's purpose is to take action through intersectional grassroots activism to promote feminist ideals, lead societal change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect the equal rights of all women and girls in all aspects of social, political, and economic life. We urge Oregon legislators to act upon this opportunity to implement common sense gun violence legislation that will save lives.

We support SB 797 because it closes existing loopholes in our background check laws. Over 90% of firearm background checks are completed within minutes, but some take longer. Under current law, a seller is permitted to sell the gun - even if the check is not complete - after three business days. This frequently is referred to as the Charleston loophole, named for the murders that took place in Charleston, SC, when Dylann Roof was allowed to buy a gun under exactly these circumstances. SB 797 also keeps guns out of the hands of domestic abusers by closing the so-called "boyfriend/girlfriend" loophole. We know that the point at which a victim of domestic violence leaves an abusive relationship is when they are most at risk of further violence and even death from their abuser. Oregon has taken good steps to restrict firearm privileges for domestic partners who are convicted of violent crimes, but those laws are restricted to those who are married or co-parents. SB 797 would empower the protective order process to prohibit the possession of firearms in all forms of domestic relationships.

SB 868 makes it possible for families and law enforcement to take action to intervene and limit a person's access to firearms when they're demonstrating signs of a serious crisis. An Extreme Risk Protection Order saves lives while ensuring all parties receive due process. In too many cases, we hear after the fact that there were warning signs before an act of gun violence took place. Current Oregon law lacks the necessary tools to temporarily remove firearms from people in crisis who clearly demonstrate that they are a danger to themselves and others. By establishing Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO), SB 868 empowers families and law enforcement to prevent gun tragedies and save lives, decreasing the risk of gun violence and also helping people to seek care to address the underlying reasons that put them at risk for gun violence.

We hope that you will join us in supporting SB 797 and SB 868. We must end the epidemic of gun violence in our society, and these two bills are critical to ensuring women's safety from domestic abusers.

Sincerely,

*Lisa Frack for the Oregon state chapter of the National Organization for Women (Oregon NOW)*

*Sheila Swinford for Central Oregon Coast NOW*

*Bud Feuleless for Greater Portland NOW*

*TeriAnn Mason for High Desert NOW*

*Renee Reichert for Mid-Willamette Valley NOW*

*Laurie Notaro for South Willamette Valley NOW*