



MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Floyd Prozanski
Vice Chair Kim Thatcher
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Leigh Dolin, MD, OMA Past President

Date: April 17th, 2017

Re: Support for SB 797 and SB 868

The Oregon Medical Association supports SB 797 and SB 868 as initiatives that strengthen existing gun laws, and create further protections to help curb irresponsible and dangerous gun use. OMA members understand the importance of gun safety for their patients and support preventative measures that ensure guns are obtained and stored appropriately. Addressing firearm violence as a public health issue, rather than as a question of individual rights, acknowledges the risk posed by guns to society as a whole and fosters solutions that protect the whole population and mitigate the risk.

Firearm violence is the leading cause of violent death in the Oregon and has been on the rise since 2011, according the Oregon Health Authority. Between 2010 and 2015, more people in Oregon died from firearm related injuries than from motor vehicle accidents, and suicides accounted for 82% of all firearm deaths. SB 797 would better protect victims of domestic violence by keeping guns out of the hands of abusers. The bill would also make those convicted of a stalking misdemeanor ineligible to purchase a firearm.

SB 868 would establish an Extreme Risk Protective Order in Oregon, similar to laws in Washington, California and Connecticut. The Order would allow law enforcement and family members to seek a temporary court order removing firearms from an individual in crisis who demonstrates a clear danger to themselves and others. The Order is temporary, and due process is guaranteed for all parties.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2015 the U.S. had an age-adjusted suicide rate of 13.3 per 100,000; Oregon's rate was higher, at 17.8. Nearly half of these Oregon suicides were due to firearm injury. Research studying the impact of Connecticut's gun legislation has indicated these policies are effective in reducing gun suicides.

As doctors, our job is to prescribe the best course of care for our patients—even if that requires making changes. For too long, we've treated gun violence as an inevitable or intractable problem. It is not. Evidence and research demonstrate there are common-sense steps we can take to make our communities safer and still allow responsible gun use.

We urge your support of SB 797 and SB 868.