

My name is Melissa Pancurek. I am a veteran, pistol coach and recreational shooter so it may surprise you that I'm in support of HB 4145. I served nine years in the military. I was a first responder on September 11 standing in the rubble of what was the Pentagon. I re-entered the military after that to serve my final three years.

I got married while on active duty. When I moved in with my partner upon our return, I found an AK-47 in the closet. My husband told me that when his first wife had left him, he took that gun and camped out in the backyard of the man he suspected of sleeping with her. During our time together, I heard more than one story of this nature.

Simultaneously, I got a new boss at work. He and I got along well, I thought. One night he tried to kiss me. I rejected his advances but he just got worse and became violent. I didn't know who to turn to for help because my boss was buddies with our supervisors. My husband? He might use that automatic weapon in the closet. I knew my boss also had a gun because bragged about threatening his wife with it. Fortunately, I was lucky enough to get out of the situation.

On December 11, 2012, I survived a mass shooting in the Clackamas Town Center Mall. The shooter fired 16 shots from an AR 15, killing two people and wounding a third. He pointed the gun in my face and pulled the trigger. His gun jammed, and luckily, he did not know how to fix it. He went on to kill himself with a pistol.

So far, sheer luck has saved me and countless other women from gun violence, but Oregonians, we can do more. We should have laws that keep abusive dating partners who are under a restraining order from passing a background check, just like we do with abusive domestic partners. Convicted stalkers shouldn't be allowed to have guns. And law enforcement should be notified every time a prohibited purchaser tries to buy a gun, because the purchaser knows it's illegal to try and buy, and breaks the law with the attempt. Right now, it's rare that that illegal act is investigated at all, much less prosecuted.

For me and so many women who know what violent men are capable of, I implore you to vote 'yes' on HB 4145 because luck eventually runs out.

Melissa Pancurek

