



February 19, 2018

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

Re: 4145A

Children First represents the interests of Oregon's 880,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive. Beginning in 2015, Children First has worked with our partners to identify legislative proposals that will help achieve that vision. HB 4145A which would protect victims of domestic violence by prohibiting gun purchase and possession by abusive dating partners is part of the 2018 Children's Agenda. We think it is important to remember that these victims include the children and teens who are often secondary victims of domestic violence.

Current federal and Oregon law prohibit gun possession by people convicted of or under a restraining order for abusing their spouses, but generally does not include abuse between dating partners. Closing this loophole would protect women from abusive dating partners, by ensuring that their abusers are prohibited from possessing guns under Oregon law. When there are children involved, they would also be protected by this legislation.

Children can be unrecognized victims of domestic and sexual violence. Exposure alone can be traumatic. At the least, children's lives are disrupted by the abuse and what must be done in response to that abuse. When firearms are present the lethality of domestic violence increases and expands the number of victims.

The 2016 DHS report "Striving to Meet the Need" reported a total of 7,653 secondary victims served by community-based domestic and sexual violence programs in 2016, including 6,307 children ages 12 and under and 1,346 teens.

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ABUSE/DOMESTIC/Documents/2016-Striving-to-Meet-the-Need.pdf>

Please support HB 4145A to protect women and their children.

Sincerely,
Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director