



Tuesday, February 6th, 2018

To: Chair Barker and members of the House Judiciary Committee

Re: Support HB 4145

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility is the local chapter of an national organization of health professionals committed to protecting human life from the gravest threats to health and survival. We represent more than 2000 health professionals and public health advocates throughout the state who care deeply about the health of our communities and believe we must employ sound public policy to protect public health. We urge you to protect public health by supporting HB 4145.

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Gun violence has reached epidemic proportions in our state and nation. Deaths from gun violence in the US far surpass all other industrialized countries. In fact, the American Medical Association has declared gun violence to be a public health crisis.

In response to this public health crisis, states like Massachusetts have taken the lead by enacting strong gun safety legislation, which has produced a sharp decline in gun violence while preserving the rights of gun ownership. We are calling on our legislators to recognize and act upon their leadership position to promote the welfare of Oregonians.

We have an alarming situation here in Oregon, with a gun death rate greater than the national average. Current Oregon law does not prohibit convicted stalkers from having guns, even though attempted murders of women are frequently preceded by incidents of stalking. 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. This gap in the law has become increasingly deadly as the share of homicides committed by dating partners has been increasing for three decades, and now just as many women are killed by dating partners as by spouses.

Fortunately, common sense prevention measures like HB 4145 is a step that will help get the public health epidemic of gun violence under control. This bill would prohibit convicted stalkers from purchasing or possessing firearms; close the "Dating Partner" loophole; and tighten requirements for reporting illegal attempts to purchase firearms. By voting for this bill, you will be saving lives.

Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals in Oregon understand the urgency of this issue and are speaking out for common sense gun control measures that protect public health. Evidence from other states shows that bills like these save the lives of individuals in domestic violence situations.

We urge you to listen to the advice of Oregon doctors, nurses, and other health professionals and support HB 4145 to save the lives of your fellow Oregonians.

Kelly Campbell
Executive Director

Elaine McKenzie, RN, MPH
Board Vice-President

