

DATE March 29, 2019

TO: The Honorable Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Jimmy Unger, MD, MPH  
Oregon Pediatric Society  
971-336-1697

**SUBJECT:**

For the record, I am, Jimmy Unger, MD, MPH representing the Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS). OPS is the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our members are committed to improving the health and well-being of all Oregon children. We carry out our health equity mission through policy advocacy; quality improvement programs that support practice change; and the ongoing education of providers who serve children. I am submitting written testimony writing in support of SB 978 with the important provision for safe gun storage. This bill will help ensure safe firearms storage and begins to address the public health crisis of gun violence.

Oregon's firearm fatality rate is higher than the national average, with an average of about one death per day. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for my patients aged 1-24 years of age. Access to firearms increases the likelihood of suicide attempts being successful. Properly secured firearms are 84% less likely to result in shooting. Nationally, ~ 7% of all children live in homes with firearms that are not safely stored. Child access protection laws are associated with a 30% reduction in pediatric firearm injuries.

As a Pediatrician with more than 35 years of practice experience, I have seen my share of children injured as a direct consequence of unsafely stored firearms. It is tragic when one considers how much mortality and morbidity can be attributed to our failure to mandate safe storage of firearms.

The safe gun storage provision Senate Bill 978 mandates safe storage and transfer, appropriate reporting of lost/stolen guns, proper supervision of minors, and liability to individuals whose failure to comply with the law results in harm to others.



Legislation mandating safe guns storage enjoys the support of nearly 2/3 of Oregonians. It is an essential step in combating the public health crisis of gun violence.

In summary, I urge you and your colleagues, guided by public will, common sense, and commitment to addressing a public health crisis that impacts my patients to pass this bill.

I am more than willing to assist your committee in any way I can. I thank you for your commitment to Oregonians' health and for the opportunity to testify.

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