

April 2, 2019

RE: Support for SB 978 – Safe Gun Storage

Chair Prozanski and Senators,

Children First for Oregon represents the interests of Oregon's almost 875,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive. The concept of requiring Safe Gun Storage is included in the 2019 Children's Agenda with fifteen partner organizations registering their support

Sadly, many Oregon children attempt to commit suicide by various means each year. However, there is no method that allows a child to complete this impulsive act as effectively as a gun. Nationally, 83% of suicide attempts who use a gun end in death. For comparison, less than 2% of people who attempt suicide by poisoning or cutting themselves are successful. The easy access to guns mean that in Oregon, over the last 10 years, an average of 15 children aged 10-19 died each year by committing suicide with a gun.

Simply put, too many Oregon children have access to firearms without adult supervision. Among its various provisions, SB 978 with the -1 amendment places responsibility on the gun owner to ensure children do not gain access to firearms unless in a supervised setting. With the deaths that continue each year among Oregon children, it is beyond time to require gun owners to safely secure their weapons.

Children First for Oregon urges passage of the safe gun storage provisions included in SB 978 -1 amendment.

Thank you for your consideration.

James Barta
Strategic Director

Together we can build an Oregon where all children thrive.