



**Date:** April 2, 2019  
**To:** Senate Judiciary Committee, Chair Prozanski and Members  
**From:** Laurie Wimmer, OEA Government Relations  
**RE:** SB 978-1 [Omnibus Gun Violence Prevention Legislation]

On behalf of OEA's 45,000 members, it is my honor to submit testimony in support of SB 978-1.

This carefully drafted collection of common-sense protections for Oregon's communities will especially help to keep our children safe. Nearly a year ago, at OEA's Representative Assembly, delegates overwhelmingly voted to elevate gun violence prevention as a top priority issue for the association. They know that schools are generally the safest place for children, and yet, day after day, they learn of yet another school shooting. Day after day, schools all over Oregon must practice "active shooter drills". Day after day, we learn of precautionary lockdowns when a gun is found on campus.

The level of trauma, both inside our schoolhouse doors and out, that gun violence promotes among our youth is an emerging health crisis. Responsible adults – gun owners and non-gun owners alike – owe it to our students to enact the kinds of remedies that will make it less likely that they will become yet another statistic.

In just the first three months of 2019, 9,518 children have been killed or injured by firearms, 69 of whom were victims of mass shootings, according to the Gun Violence Archive (as of April 1). The young people of Oregon are looking to you to make their world a little safer. SB 978-1 has the potential to do just that.

In addition to making sure that responsible gun owners are securing their weapons from potentially violent people, the safe storage component of this bill may very well slow down the rate of teen suicide – which is the second-leading cause of adolescent death. Furthermore, safe storage will keep guns from being stolen; will keep them from being used in person and property crimes, and will impede tragedies that might otherwise arise in irrational or heated moments – such as a domestic altercation. That is why, we believe, so many Oregon residents support this meaningful set of policies to keep us all safer.

We thank the proponents of gun safety legislation for including provisions for public entities to ban weapons from campus, as well. In my own *alma mater* this school year, a parent used the high school restroom during the football game half time, and he laid his weapon down while doing so. He inadvertently exited the bathroom without the gun, which was found a few minutes later by students.

In another celebrated episode, a gun safety teacher accidentally discharged his weapon in front of the class, injuring a nearby student.

Though there are those who argue for arming teachers, our members emphatically dispute that such a policy would make schools safer. Unless one is a public safety officer, one should leave the weapon at home. They simply do not belong in schools.

We wholeheartedly support SB 978-1 and urge this committee to pass it. Thank you.