



## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Senator Kim Thatcher, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Courtni Dresser, OMA Government Relations  
Trevor Beltz, OMA Government Relations

Date: April 2, 2019

Re: Support for SB 978 -1

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The Oregon Medical Association supports the -1 amendment to SB 978 as a package that strengthens existing gun laws and creates further protections to help curb firearm injury and death. OMA members understand the importance of gun safety for their patients and support preventative measures that ensure firearms are obtained and stored appropriately. Addressing firearm violence as a public health issue acknowledges the risks posed by firearms to society as a whole and fosters solutions that protect the whole population and mitigate the risk.

Firearm violence is the leading cause of violent death in the Oregon and has been on the rise since 2011, according the Oregon Health Authority. Between 2010 and 2015, more people in Oregon died from firearm-related injuries than from motor vehicle accidents, and suicides accounted for 82% of all firearm deaths.<sup>i</sup> Unrestricted access to firearms is a key factor in many such cases of violent death, which makes safe storage such an important aspect of firearm safety, as most guns used for self-harm or unintentional injuries originate from the home of the victim, a friend, or relative.<sup>ii</sup> SB 976 -1 would better protect Oregonians from unintentional injury by requiring that firearms be locked up or that a trigger lock be utilized. Furthermore, by linking civil liability to weapons unlocked or not properly secured, individuals will be held accountable for failing to take preventative measures against guns falling into the hands of children.

Understanding the magnitude, severity, and potential solutions to public health problems requires data and research. Firearm violence data collection and research has long been suppressed or discouraged leaving public health with scattered fragments of the overall picture. By establishing a firearm injury reporting system, SB 978 -1 takes an important step toward collecting much needed data to guide evidence-based methods to eliminate firearm injury.

For too long, we've treated gun violence as an inevitable or intractable problem. It is not. Evidence and research demonstrate there are common-sense steps we can take to make our communities safer and still allow responsible gun use.

The OMA urges your support of SB 978 with the -1 amendment

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<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASES/CONDITIONS/COMMUNICABLEDISEASE/CDSUMMARYNEWSLETTER/Documents/2017/ohd6613.pdf>

ii Grossman DC, Reay DT, Baker SA. Self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and adolescents: the source of the firearm. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 1999;153(8):875-878.