



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE February 7, 2020

TO: The Honorable Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: James E. Unger, MD, MPH
Co-chair of the Oregon Pediatric Society Advocacy Committee

SUBJECT: House Bill 4005 on Firearm Safety Requirements

The Oregon Pediatric Society (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. OPS strongly supports House Bill 4005. This bill that would make great progress toward the goal of reducing gun violence by requiring gun owners to safely store their firearms.

For the record, I am pediatrician Jimmy Unger. I have been in practice for more than 36 years, currently at Kaiser Permanente's Rockwood Medical Office near Gresham.

I have had the misfortune of seeing kids rendered paraplegic by accidental gun violence. Fortunately, none of my patients were among the 48 Oregon youth who in 2017, aided by the absence of meaningful safe gun storage legislation, died by suicide through self-inflicted gunshot wounds.

By placing the responsibility of safe gun storage squarely in the hands of gun owners, this bill will save the lives of both suicidal youth and exploring, curious toddlers and young children who accidentally discharge firearms.

Any gun legislation is likely to face strong opposition from special interests who may confuse this proposal with an attack on their personal liberty. However, there is no constitutional right to dangerously store lethal weapons. As a pediatrician, I can tell you that this bill is an important protection for my vulnerable patients from the threat of unsafely stored firearms. OPS urges you to support HB 4005.

Please let me know if I and my OPS colleagues can be a resource for the House Judiciary Committee on this matter.