



## Testimony in support of HB 4005

Teri Mills RN, MS, CNE-Ret.

February 7, 2020

Chair Sanchez and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 4005. My name is Teri Mills. I am a registered nurse, the 2019 Oregon Nurse of the Year, and a member of the Oregon Nurses Association, a supporting organization for this important bill, representing over 15,000 members working throughout our state's health care system. I also serve as a local legislative lead for Moms Demand Action.

The nurse's role in prevention and mitigation of gun violence begins with recognizing risks both at the individual and community level. I am here today to tell you about the devastating effects of gun violence, that are largely the result of weapons that too easily reach the hands of children and those who are contemplating ending their lives and/or the lives of others. In Oregon, on average, one person loses their life every day to gun violence. 89% of unintentional shooting deaths of children occur in the home, and most of these deaths occur when children are playing with a loaded gun in their parents' absence.<sup>1</sup> Fifty-four Oregon children under the age of 18 died by firearm suicide between 2010 and 2015.<sup>2</sup>

This public health crisis adversely affects nurses and healthcare workers as they fight to save lives; dealing with the amount of blood loss, witnessing the irrevocable damage, and seeing the grief of families who have lost loved ones due to accidental shootings and suicide. A central tenet of a nurse's ethical obligation is to serve as an advocate for public health. This is why I joined the Oregon Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and it is why I am urging a YES vote on HB 4005.

A new study released in May of 2019 showed that family fire, a shooting that involves an improperly stored or misused gun found in the home, is the single greatest contributor to firearm injuries and death in children. The study published in the journal JAMA Pediatrics used 2015 household data on gun ownership to show that if parents had safely stored their guns at home, up to a third of gun suicides and unintentional deaths among children and teens could have been prevented.<sup>3</sup>

There currently are no federal standards that require locking devices for firearms. As concerned Oregonians, moms, and nurses, we must take the lead on this issue to protect the safety of our children and our loved ones. No family should experience a death due to an unintentional shooting that could have been prevented in the first place.

Nurses have a moral obligation to promote, advocate for, and protect the rights, health, and safety of our patients and the community we live in. On behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association and Moms Demand Action, I encourage you to support HB 4005 that has great potential to save lives and prevent needless suffering.

<sup>1</sup> Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, Gun Safety and Public Health: Policy Recommendations for a More Secure America. (September, 2013). Available at <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-safety-public-health-policy-recommendations-for-a-more-secure-america/>

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Health Authority. CD Summary: A New Approach to Preventing Firearm Deaths. (November, 2017). Available at <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASES/CONDITIONS/COMMUNICABLE/DISEASE/CDSUMMARYNEWSLETTER/Documents/2017/ohd6613.pdf>

18765 SW Boones Ferry Rd., Suite 200 • Tualatin, OR 97062 • P 503.293.0011 800.634.3552 • F 503.293.0013

E-mail: [ona@oregonrn.org](mailto:ona@oregonrn.org) • [www.oregonrn.org](http://www.oregonrn.org)

A Constituent Association of the American Nurses Association

<sup>3</sup> Monuteaux, M., Azrael, D., Miller, M. (May 13, 2019). Association of increased safe household firearm storage with firearm suicide and unintentional death among U.S. youths. *JAMA Pediatrics*. 173(7):657-662. Available <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2733158>