

Attn: [Representative Tawna Sanchez](#), Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

Subject: HB 4005 - Relating to firearm safety requirements

Dear Representative Sanchez and members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

I will leave it to others to argue the merits of this particular bill. But I would like to bring to your attention what I see as a problem just as glaring and, in the long run, perhaps more serious than this particular issue. That problem is the almost complete lack of information on the provenance of firearms seized from criminals by Oregon Law Enforcement virtually every day. Below is the text of a letter that I wrote to Governor Brown about this question and which I later also provided to Senator Courtney. I received a response from neither.

June 3, 2019

**Office of the Governor
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047**

Re: Guns and Spanish

Dear Governor Brown:

My name is Lloyd Smith. We met a few times when you used to join us in our Spanish conversation group in the State Library several years ago. I retired 20 years ago as Director of the Oregon Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS) Division in the Oregon State Police. A significant aspect of this program was the Oregon Uniform Crime Reporting program.

Recently I have been in contact with several old friends in Oregon Law Enforcement about the question of the provenance of guns seized in arrests or at crime scenes by police agencies, and the apparent lack of any organized tracking or collection of statistics regarding the history of those guns. Records of guns reported stolen or lost do reside in the State and National on-line databases; however, these records deal with specific information about individual guns and do not lend themselves to any in-depth analysis.

Pretty much every day in the media we see or read about a crime involving a gun, many times even with photos and descriptions. Yet there is no local or statewide source of data available to analyze their history from a policy or logistics point of view. For example, a statistical analysis of how guns really find their way into the hands of criminals would do much to inform the discussion about meaningful gun control, as opposed to the anecdotal and subjective based platforms that are used currently in most spheres.

In looking over the various State agencies involved in criminal justice matters, it is not clear to me where a proposal for some type of system of data collection about the history of guns might best be directed. But, based on its mission statement, the Criminal Justice Council seems to be a possible candidate, at least for a small study or investigation to determine the feasibility of such an idea. Of course, and as usual, the largest burden would most likely fall on local police departments who would have to do the follow up.

Thanks for your ear.

Sincerely,

*Lloyd Smith
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P.S. The Spanish group is still meeting Thursdays at noon – now at the IKE BOX in Salem. You are always welcome 😊

My thanks to the House Committee on Judiciary for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Smith