

[SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF CAROL MANSTROM]

February 6, 2020

My name is Carol Manstrom. I've lived in Eugene, OR for over 30 years. I am retired from a 26 year career in law enforcement. I carried a firearm as a part of my job. I am a gun owner.

3 years ago, my teenage son died. My son's name was Will. He was a Senior at Marist High School in Eugene. At that time, Will was living across town from me, at my former husband's residence. My former husband left a loaded handgun unsecured and within easy access in his home. On Valentine's Day 2017 my son, Will, was found dead. He had died by suicide, using that unsecured gun.

Just 3 days prior, Will and I met for lunch and we went to an appointment to have his Senior pictures taken, and, I gave him his high school class ring. Will was planning to attend Oregon State University, with a Pre-Engineering major. He looked forward to living in the dorms with his friends. He was getting ready to start his high school Varsity Track practices. I know in my heart that Will did not want to die.

But, being a teenager can be tough. We were all young once, and we know it is easy for teens to make impulsive decisions. This is a reality in Oregon today, as teen suicide rates continue to rise. While our kids are growing up, there are so many things we do to protect them—infant car seats, bike helmets, protective athletic gear, seatbelts, and more....we should emphasize responsible gun storage just as much!

If a loaded gun was not accessible to Will, I believe he would be with us today.

Safe storage prevents suicides.

I urge you to do your own research....please look at the statistics and the facts. Such as, access the websites for Means Matter at Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The Second Amendment does not absolve gun owners of personal responsibility for careless or reckless behavior. Guns are inherently dangerous. A gun should only be accessible to the lawful owner. This is common sense.

My son's precious life, and his future, have been lost forever. But, I am here today to be Will's voice, to declare support for House Bill 4005.

Safe gun storage is NOT anti- 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. Safe gun storage is pro-life, pro-youth, and anti-suicide.

Thank you.

Carol Manstrom