

Testimony Supporting HB4005
February 7, 2020

Chair Sanchez and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB4005 today. My name is Hilary Uhlig. I am a former teacher, a parent, and the volunteer Chapter Leader for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

When I became a teacher 20 years ago after moving to Oregon from the midwest, I was surprised that schools did not have to practice tornado drills like when I was a child. It never occurred to me then that lockdowns and active shooter situations would become the norm for school children today. As a parent, I've been on the receiving end of texts from my kids during their school lockdowns, and have had to sit helplessly to wait for the all-clear, trying to calm their fears via text.

This week marks National Gun Violence Survivors Week because by early February, more Americans are killed with guns than are killed in other high-income nations in an entire year. And many more people in the US are shot and wounded, threatened with a gun, or witness an act of gun violence.

Our gun death rate is tragic, and unique. The United States has become a nation of gun violence survivors, directly and indirectly, and Oregon is no exception. Nearly 82% of gun deaths in Oregon are suicides, that is one every 22 hours. And gun violence is now the second leading cause of death for our children.

But it doesn't have to be like this. Research shows that secure storage legislation is impactful in reducing suicide by firearm, reducing child access and unintentional shootings, and even in making our schools safer. In up to 80% of instances of gun violence on school grounds, shooters obtained their guns from home, their relative's home or from friends. Secure storage laws are a critical piece of the solution to keeping underage shooters from accessing irresponsibly stored guns and preventing gun violence on school grounds.

There is no denying that unauthorized access to guns presents a serious safety risk to Oregon families. HB4005 seeks to set a standard of safety, encourage responsible behavior, and hold people accountable.

I urge you to support this bill.
Thank you.