

Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger and fellow committee members,

My name is Alexandria Goddard; I was an organizer for March for Our Lives PDX, and now am a youth activist and educator. I have worked on suicide prevention and gun violence prevention for over two years, and with that work, I've seen many bills, and many laws, proposed to save lives.

The truth about HB 4005 is plain and simple; it incentivizes responsible practices for gun owners, and actually protects those who already practice safe storage methods. Most of all, it is a deterrent to suicide. Safe storage *is* the first step towards a safer state for all Oregonians.

Suicide, which is the second leading cause of death for those aged 10 to 24, is a decision made in haste. Of all the methods of suicide, suicide by gun is the most fatal form, with over 75% of attempts leading to death. Guns, particularly unsecured guns, are a huge risk for those struggling with depression. I am tired of the cries of, "I never saw it coming" and, "if only I had done something more." I'm telling you now: you can do more. Safe storage is more.

I have friends who are suicide survivors. Friends who, should they have had access to a gun, wouldn't be with me anymore. One of my closest friends, whose laugh lights up a room, who sings the best off-key Christmas carols, and who gives the tightest hugs, wouldn't be here with me anymore if he had been able to access a gun. He is not alone. There are hundreds of teens who seriously contemplate ending their own lives each year. There are hundreds that, should they have had a gun in their hands, wouldn't be here with their families and friends.

In the time it takes for a person to unlock a firearm, they are forced to stop. Think. Move from action, to reflection. It forces them to think about their next move, it forces them out of a short-term crisis. It is the difference between a survival story and fatal loss. It is the difference between a mother losing a child, a brother losing a sister, a person losing a family.

And that is why it is so desperately important to pass safe storage. It protects our most vulnerable citizens. It protects a family from being shattered.

In short, House bill 4005 is safe. It's thoughtful. It's vital. I urge you to vote yes on 4005, and to think of the most vulnerable people in your own life. Think of your children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. Think of gun owners in your life who deserve lawful protection for keeping their firearms safe and secured. Think of your moral obligation to them, and vote yes.