

To the Members of the Health Care Committee:

I am writing in support of HB 2510 which addresses Secure Firearm storage.

I had an experiences that impressed upon me the critical importance of this bill. When firearms are stored safely, lives can be saved.

Thurston High School, Springfield OR. May 21, 1998

The Portland VA hospital's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder team was on our way home after a training at Roseburg VA. Our clinic director called and diverted the team, to the site of a tragic shooting. Two students had been killed and 25 injured by Kip Kinkle, a fellow student and the son of teachers. Kip had shot and killed both his parents, before taking the guns to school.

I will never forget entering the High School, communicating with the devastated staff and students. The floor of the cafeteria was still streaked with blood.

At the trial, it was learned that the parents had taken Kip to counseling, because of concerns about their son's anger problems and fascination with guns, explosives and knives. Sadly, there was nothing in the therapist's notes about a discussion about locking up the family's guns. I believe that had HB 2510 been law, with the education about it, to both the public-at-large and the mental health community, this tragedy and so many others since could have been prevented.

In the too frequent school gunfire incidents, up to 80% of the shooters under the age of 18 got their guns from home, or the homes of friends and relatives. This has got to stop.

Every year, nearly 350 children under the age of 18 gain access to firearms and unintentionally shoot themselves or others.

Now is the time to vote for this Safe Storage bill, we must implement common sense laws that have the potential to save innocent lives.

Sincerely,  
Patricia L. Chandler, MA, LPC