

Chair Prusak and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andy Harris. I am a board member of Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices. We assess public policies from our faith perspective and advocate for the common good, especially for those people who are marginalized in our society and whose voices often are not heard.

We are all safer when guns are stored unloaded, locked, and separated from ammunition. Securing firearms protects children and adults by preventing unintentional shootings and gun suicides. One study found that households that locked both firearms and ammunition were associated with an 85% lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens, and a 78% lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries. Gun suicide claims the lives of 23,000 Americans every year.

Who are most at risk of suicide? – those who have lost their jobs or otherwise are facing economic hardship, those who are suffering from declining health and aging, those who feel harassed or are subject to discrimination and racism, and those who are depressed and have lost hope. Having a loaded gun readily accessible threatens their very survival.

In addition, each year an estimated 200,000 to 500,000 guns are stolen, and many are funneled into the underground market, where they can be transferred to people with dangerous histories. This is a particular concern now as gun sales in Oregon have increased by 43% in the first 10 months of 2020.

HB 2510 addresses unsecured firearms that are a threat to children, to theft, and to those who may impulsively take someone's life, including their own. As a public safety measure for vulnerable populations, Oregon should require that all firearms are locked, safely secured, and separated from from ammunition.

OCCV urges your support of HB 2510. Thank you for your time and interest.

Andy Harris
Board of Directors
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices