

House Committee on Health Care
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Prusak, Vice-chairs Hayden and Salinas, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for HB 2510 today. My name is Diane Peterson and I live in Springfield, Oregon. I am an active member of the Democratic Party of Lane County and a gun violence prevention advocate.

- I appreciate that this bill is being heard by the health care committee. To approach the issue of gun violence from a public health angle is appropriate, because gun violence is a public health crisis.
- There is currently no Oregon law requiring gun owners to securely store their weapon. At the same time, we know that approximately 54% of gun owners - over half - do not secure their guns, leaving them available for theft and trafficking, for unintentional shootings including of and by children, and for use in suicides and homicides - including school shootings and tragedies such as the one at the Clackamas Town Center that killed Cindy Ann Yuille and Steven Forsyth, for whom this Act is named.
- HB 2510 would appropriately hold gun owners accountable for the deadly consequences of failure to securely store their firearms.
- By and large, our laws have failed to address the escalating crisis of gun violence in our state and nation. Every day in the United States, approximately 106 people are shot and killed with a gun, 232 wounded, and many more lives in the family and social networks around these individuals irreparably damaged by gun violence. In Oregon, there are over 500 gun deaths per year, at least 25 of these children and teens.
- In Oregon, the vast majority of gun deaths - over 80% - are suicides. This is higher than the national average of approximately 67%. Gun suicide attempts are the most lethal, resulting in death 90% of the time. Research shows that suicidal acts are impulsive, and that as stated in the bill, "a proven barrier to the impulse to commit suicide is securing firearms with a lock or storing firearms in locked containers". These deaths occur often in rural southern, eastern, and coastal counties represented by Republican legislators (Harney, Baker, Josephine, Curry, and Klamath being those in the top tier). One would think that it would be common sense for Oregon Republican Representatives and Senators to protect the health and safety of people in their districts simply by enacting a secure storage law such as HB 2510.
- With regard to school shootings, research shows that 80% of school shooters under age 18 used an unsecured gun from their own home, or from the home of a friend or

family member. Our current laws have failed to address gun violence in schools at the crisis level that it is. Meanwhile, our children undergo terrifying and traumatic active shooter trainings because of the very real and ongoing threat of school shootings. This is deeply concerning given that we have had fatal school shootings right here in Oregon - at Thurston high school in Springfield, Reynolds High School in Troutdale, and Umpqua Community College. Every year we have incidents of unsecured firearms in schools around the state, like the one at Springwater Trail High School in Gresham in 2007, when 10 students were wounded by another student who had stolen an unsecured rifle from his stepfather. A secure storage law would decrease the likelihood of an unsecured weapon being available for this use.

- Safe storage as a method of preventing gun violence is promoted by a broad spectrum of individuals and organizations. By physicians, educators, law enforcement, legislators and other government officials, and even gun rights advocates. There are ardent gun rights advocates in Oregon who also strongly support safe storage as an effective measure to prevent unintentional shootings. NO ONE wants an unintentional shooting. This bill could and should have their support, and, I believe, bipartisan support with it. Safe storage is not a bipartisan issue. It is a common sense, public safety, public health measure that would effectively prevent gun deaths and injuries. Oregonians have the right to be free from gun violence.

Please send this bill to the floor for a vote. Thank you for your consideration and your time.

Diane Peterson
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