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Oregon Faith Movement

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March 11, 2021

Chair Prusak and Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

My name is Cecil Charles Prescod, I am the Incoming Chair, Public Policy Advocacy Committee, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and serve as Minister of Faith Formation at Ainsworth United Church of Christ in Portland.

EMO is a statewide association of Christian, ecumenical and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians. For many years, in partnership with numerous other faith communities across Oregon, we have conducted the Interfaith Advocacy Day at the Oregon Capitol, and gun violence prevention has been a core priority of those advocacy days for several years.

I submit this testimony in support of House Bill 2510 to ensure that guns across Oregon are safely stored. Gun violence touches people from all walks of life and all faiths. The fear of violence harms our neighborhoods and our relationships with our neighbors. All people should be able to live a life free of fear. House Bill 2510 is a modest, sensible step to ensure that firearms do not end up in the hands of those who are not prepared to handle them.

We recognize that no one policy will eliminate the scourge of gun violence from our state. But there are numerous meaningful steps we can take to make our communities safer and address the epidemic of gun violence that plagues our nation in a way unseen in any other developed nation. House Bill 2510 will take important steps to prevent access to unsecured weapons and prevent gun trafficking. We urge this committee and the entire Legislature to adopt it.

It is not lost on our faith communities that many important gun violence prevention policies were blocked in the 2019 & 2020 Legislative Sessions despite the support of a majority of legislators. We urge you not to let that occur again in this important year.

**Indeed, gun sales have surged over the past 12 months<sup>1</sup> and research data has shown many of these purchasers are first time owners with less experience on the proper storage of firearms.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The Oregon State Police Firearms Instant Check System (OSP FICS) shows a significant increase in gun sales. The Bulletin recently covered the subject: "Gun sales break records in Oregon," Suzanne Roig, *The Bend Bulletin*, February 21, 2021. [https://www.bendbulletin.com/business/gun-sales-break-records-in-oregon/article\\_3d563a84-7140-11eb-8ab6-4ff132a3945c.html](https://www.bendbulletin.com/business/gun-sales-break-records-in-oregon/article_3d563a84-7140-11eb-8ab6-4ff132a3945c.html).

<sup>2</sup> "Millions of First-Time Gun Buyers During COVID-19," Jim Curcuruto, NSSF, "The Firearm Trade Association," June 1, 2020. <https://www.nssf.org/millions-of->

The policies in House Bill 2510 will begin saving lives the moment they are put in place. Delay is not an option. Please pass this important legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

The Rev. Cecil Prescod  
Incoming Chair, Public Policy Advocacy Committee,  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Minister of Faith Formation, Ainsworth United Church of Christ,  
Portland (for identification purposes only)

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[first-time-gun-buyers-during-covid-19/](https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/gun-sales-first-time-buyers-skyrocket-amid-fears-bloody-election-n1243510). Also see: “Gun sales to first-time buyers skyrocket amid fears of ‘bloody’ election and unrest,” Reuters, October 15, 2020. <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/gun-sales-first-time-buyers-skyrocket-amid-fears-bloody-election-n1243510>.