

My name is Roby Lanford and I live in Bend. I'm writing to urge this committee to support HB 2510, which would create a law requiring gun owners to store their firearms securely when the weapon is not on their person.

Millions of responsible gun owners follow secure storage practices, but it's estimated that more than half of gun owners actually do not lock their guns.

Unauthorized access to firearms is a major source of gun violence for our youth.

? Firearms are the second-leading cause of death in children and teens in Oregon.

? In our state, an average of 29 children and teens die by guns every year, and 68% of these deaths are suicides.

? In incidents of gun violence on school grounds, up to 80 percent of shooters under the age of 18 obtained their guns from their own home, a relative's home, or from friends.

Common-sense policies like secure firearm storage work. One study found that households that locked both firearms and ammunition were associated with a 78 percent lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and an 85 percent lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children, compared to those that locked neither.

A 2019 study estimated that if half of households with children switched from leaving their guns unlocked to responsibly storing them all locked, one-third of youth gun suicides and unintentional deaths could be prevented – saving an estimated 251 lives in a single year.

As a parent of two teenagers in the Oregon public school system, I am even more concerned now about the potential for a school shooting or youth suicide in our community due to the toll the pandemic has taken on the mental health of our students. If a young person cannot access a gun and ammunition when in crisis, a life will be saved, possibly hundreds of them!

Please vote yes on HB 2510.