

Everytown For Gun Safety/Moms Demand Action
Testimony in support of HB 2543
February 18, 2021

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony to you today. My name is Teri Mills. I live in Washington County. I am retired following a long career as a nurse educator teaching at Portland Community College (PCC). I also am an active member of the Oregon Chapter of Moms Demand Action.

I write to you today to urge your support for HB 2543, which prohibits transfer of a firearm by a gun dealer or private party if the State Police is unable to determine whether the recipient is qualified to receive a firearm. This bill is referred to as "closing the Charleston loophole" because in 2015, a white supremacist entered the Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston and murdered nine black people as they were praying. This perpetrator, who was legally barred from buying a firearm, was able to acquire a gun and commit this horrific crime because his background check was not completed within three business days and the sale could proceed.

During the past year, Oregon, like the rest of our country, has seen a huge increase in gun sales. In Oregon, the Firearm Instant Check System had nearly 100,000 more requests for background checks in 2020 than in 2019.¹ Currently, firearm sales may proceed once three business days have elapsed, even if the buyer's criminal background check has not yet been completed. To assure everyone's safety, it is even more important that people who shouldn't own a firearm are not allowed to bypass the background check system.

Nineteen states and the District of Columbia have already closed this loophole, understanding having a little extra time to complete a background check will ultimately prevent a gun from ending up in the wrong hands, for example, someone who is prohibited from having a gun and wishes to take their own life or harm a family member.

As a nurse, it is my ethical responsibility to advocate for the safety of my patients, their families, and our community. HB 2543 is common sense and life-saving legislation that will ultimately prevent needless tragedies. I urge you to join me in support by voting yes on HB 2543.

¹ Everytown analysis of Oregon Firearm Instant Check System Dashboard,
<https://www.oregon.gov/osp/Pages/firearmsdashboard.aspx>