

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kathy Beckley. I live in Tigard and am a volunteer with the Oregon Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I am also a school educator, and have been for 20 years. I am in support of SB 554.

Currently, local and school officials in Oregon are forced to allow the carrying of loaded firearms into government buildings and all public Oregon schools including grades K-12 as well as most areas of college campuses. This is unacceptable. Children and their families should always feel safe when coming onto a school campus. Kids cannot learn when they feel unsafe and it is our duty as adults to watch over them, make sure those safety needs are being met.

We also already restrict concealed carry permit holders from carrying loaded guns into courthouses. Why should other sensitive locations where children are present, like schools, be any different?

Gun violence shatters families, impacts schools and entire communities. The trauma and devastation that our students, teachers, neighbors, and communities are dealing with is REAL.

That's why SB 554, a bill to allow local governments, colleges and school districts to prohibit firearms in public buildings, is important. We need to make sure local officials have the tools they need to protect public safety.

When I return to in-person learning (as well as my young children), I am hopeful that this bill will have passed, It would make me feel more comfortable and able to encourage a warm, safe, and inviting environment for students and families.

Thank you for your time.