

March 7, 2023

Submitter: Teri Mills RN

Senate Committee on Education

SB551

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Education Committee:

I am writing today to urge your support of SB 551, legislation that will require school districts across Oregon to distribute information to parents and guardians of enrolled students explaining that with the passage of SB554, all firearms must now be securely stored. Additionally, keeping medications out of the reach of children will be reinforced.

According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) approximately one-third of American children live in homes with firearms, and of these households, 43% contain at least one unlocked firearm. [The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recorded 3,597 children died by gunfire](#); this is the highest it has been in more than 20 years. Children and teens who are able to access a firearm are also at greater risk of suicide. [In Oregon](#), an average of 31 children and teens die by guns every year, of which 63% of these deaths are suicides.

Gun violence has reached epidemic proportions, causing irrevocable damage and pain to our kids, their families, and our communities. It doesn't have to be this way. Prevention saves lives. Be a life saver today and please vote yes on SB 551.

Thank you,

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