

Submitter: Hilary Uhlig
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB551

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Webber, and Members of the Committee -
As a parent and a former teacher, I am asking you to support SB551 to require school districts to notify families about secure storage of firearms and medications.

Every year, nearly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else, most often another child, and nearly 1200 children die by gun suicide.

As a gun safety advocate, I've spoken with families whose children have died by unintentional shootings and by gun suicide. The trauma and devastation that they cope with every day is immeasurable.

Often they say they wish they would have known the risk – that access to a gun increases the risk of death by suicide by 3 times. Young people aged 10-14 have the fastest growing firearm suicide rate of any age group over the last decade – up 146%.

According to a study of pediatric firearm injuries, nearly 90 percent of unintentional shooting injuries and deaths among children under the age of 15 occur at home. A study on storage practices showed that households that locked both firearms and ammunition had an 85 percent lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teenagers than those that did not use secure storage methods.

This year we have seen alarming national stories, including one of a teacher being shot in the classroom by a 6 year old. Just last week a teen was arrested for bringing a gun to South Salem High School. We know that $\frac{3}{4}$ of school shooters get their gun from the home of a parent or close relative.

The Oregon legislature has already passed a law to require gun owners to securely store their firearms. SB 551 is the next logical step to help educate our Oregon families with school-aged children about the importance of secure storage to prevent child suicide, unintentional shootings, and school shootings.
I urge you to support SB 551.

(statistic sources at everytown.org)