

Everytown for Gun Safety/Moms Demand Action
Testimony in Support of Prohibiting Persons Under 21 From Possessing Firearms (limited exceptions)
Submitter- Teri Mills RN
March 22, 2023

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Wallen and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of prohibiting those under 21 from purchasing semiautomatic assault rifles. My name is Teri Mills. I reside in Washington County. I am a retired nurse educator, a mother, a grandmother and am an active volunteer of the Oregon Chapter of Moms Demand Action.

Currently, [federal law prohibits those under 21 from purchasing a handgun](#).¹ That is a positive step, but it is not enough, especially because a shocking new pattern in mass shootings has emerged in recent years- [six of the nine deadliest shootings since 2018](#)² were committed by individuals under the age of 21 who used an assault rifle.

[Examples include](#) -³

- 2018 | Parkland, FL – 17 dead, 17 injured
- 2022 | Buffalo, NY – 10 dead, 3 injured
- 2022 | Uvalde, TX – 21 dead, 18 injured

Oregon is not immune. Last August, shoppers in a Bend Safeway were terrorized by a 20-year old who used a semi-automatic rifle that killed two people, including an employee who disarmed the gunman.

This June will mark my 50th year as a registered nurse. Often, I am asked about what has changed and while there certainly are many positive advancements in the medical and nursing arena, one area where there has been huge regression is that now we must prepare for mass casualties due to gun violence. Yes, many lives are taken. But that is only part of the story. Those who survive are often faced with life-long debilitating issues like loss of eyesight, loss of limbs, loss of mobility, loss of future income to live independently and the daily recurring nightmares. Just as those returning from war face post-traumatic stress, the same is true for individuals who have been shot and for the loved ones who now must step up in unimaginable ways to care for them.

And let's not leave out the grief of the healthcare workforce. It is a [falsehood](#)⁴ to think that physicians, nurses and first responders become hardened due to the frequency of these events. Our patients are our children, our families, our neighbors, and our community. We are your care givers, we are human, and we too grieve when we are fully aware of what could have been prevented.

Young adults aged 18-20 commit gun homicides at a rate of three times higher than adults over 21. There is no simple explanation as to why but what we do know that there is one logical first step that we can take together. Please support HB 2006 to tighten Oregon's gun law and raise the minimum age to 21 for the purchase of semiautomatic assault rifles. *In addition, please support a ban on ghost guns and concealed weapons in public buildings and adjacent grounds.*

¹ 2023 Everytown Gun Law Rankings. (2023). Has the state raised the minimum age for purchasing firearms? Retrieved March 14, 2023 from <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/minimum-age-to-purchase/>

² Thrush, G. and Richtel, M. Deadly Mass Shootings are Mostly by People 21 or Younger. (June 2, 2022). *The New York Times*. Retrieved March 14, 2023 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/02/us/politics/mass-shootings-young-men-guns.html>

³ Sandy Hook Promise. (2023). Raising the age to buy semi-automatic rifles. Retrieved March 14, 2023 from <https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/blog/advocacy/raising-the-age-to-buy-semi-automatic-rifles/>

⁴ Valdez, R. We must not underestimate the impact of gun violence on healthcare workers. (Dec. 5, 2022). *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality*. Retrieved March 14, 2023 from <https://www.ahrq.gov/news/blog/ahrqviews/impacts-gun-violence.html>