

Submitter: Bethany Wofford
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB2006

Dear Chair Kropf and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to you today in support of HB 2006 as a parent and a volunteer with Moms Demand Action, a grassroots movement fighting for gun safety. I live in a neighborhood in NE Portland that has had so many shootings in broad daylight that I am afraid to let my ten year old daughter walk to her friends' houses. I refuse to accept that her future and her freedom should be curtailed by our society's failure to enact common sense gun violence prevention laws. I live in a home where firearms are securely stored, unloaded, in a locked safe. Even though I grew up in Texas, and I know many responsible gun owners and hunters, I have also seen the finality of gun violence firsthand. My cousin was taken by gun homicide. He was at a party, and someone who was intoxicated and angry went into their bedroom and grabbed a gun and attempted to shoot everyone at the party. My cousin stopped him, but lost his life. I believe that we can put the value of human life and our right to walk through life without constantly wondering if yet another mass shooting is about to happen, above the complexity of implementing laws that will reduce gun violence.

Being from Texas, as well as a parent of an elementary school child, the tragic, senseless deaths of 19 children and 2 adults in Uvalde shook me particularly hard. This horrific mass shooting took me back in my mind to December 2012 when I was 9 months pregnant with my first child, and the mass shooting at Clackamas Town Center was rapidly followed by the murders of 20 children and 6 adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School. At the time I couldn't even process the devastation of these events. I couldn't imagine that I was bringing a baby into a world that let things like this happen, nor would I have believed that 5 years later nothing would have changed and I would be forced to send my baby to kindergarten in a country that instead of passing meaningful gun reform would instead subject her to lockdown drills to hide from the monsters who were still able to obtain semi-automatic weapons.

But one thing has changed: that horrific shooting galvanized a group of mothers (and more) to stand up and fight for reasonable gun violence prevention measures, and we will continue to do so. HB 2006 would raise the minimum age for purchasing a semi-automatic assault rifle, like those used in the Uvalde, Buffalo, and Sandy Hook mass shootings, to age 21— all the perpetrators in those crimes were under age 21. This seems like the bare minimum we can do, knowing what we do about brain development. We know that young adults commit gun homicides at a rate 3 times higher than adults 21 and over. We don't even let people under the age of 21 buy cigarettes in Oregon, why are we letting them buy deadly weapons?

I also support other gun violence prevention legislation to allow local governments to regulate firearms in sensitive areas, and prohibiting ghost guns. I believe these are reasonable common sense actions that will move us in the right direction and I ask for your support. I want nothing more than for my child to grow up in a culture that acknowledges the inherent dangers of guns and takes responsibility for addressing the violence we currently face every day.