

Submitter: Kyle Belleque
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB2005

Representatives,

My name is Kyle Belleque. I am a parent of two young children, and a former high school teacher. I am writing to you in support of a ban on ghost guns; HB 2005.

As with many Americans, the sadness over the amount of gun violence in our country has deeply affected me. Now as a parent of two children, the fact that firearm deaths are the number one killer of children and teenagers today is even more troubling. But I do not feel like this is inevitable. We as adults, have a responsibility to do better. Common sense gun laws are evidenced based, and proven to reduce deaths and injuries caused by firearms. Background checks, extreme risk protection orders, age limits, and waiting periods; these are all examples of strategies that we can use to prevent guns from getting into the wrong hands. Citizens and legislators have worked hard in recent years to strengthen Oregon's gun safety laws and lives have been saved. Unfortunately, ghost guns threaten to undermine that work. Underage people, people with mental health issues, people that would not pass background checks; these are all examples of people that would find it much easier to obtain a ghost gun than a traditional gun. Basically, ghost guns are very dangerous and it just makes plain sense to ban them.

Next year, my oldest child will be starting kindergarten. I want to send my child to school and feel that she can be safe there. I want her to feel safe there too. My husband and I moved to Oregon about five years ago. He is a high school teacher, and I also taught high school in Oregon until I became a stay at home parent. That first year we both had shooting threats and suicides at each of our schools. It really brought home to me how common the threat of gun violence is in our school systems. Since then, there have been several similar instances in his teaching career. It's the same with most of the teachers that I know. I cannot stress how much the threat of gun violence is always in the back of a teacher's mind these days. I can only imagine how stressful it is for students. I want things to be different for my daughter's generation, so I have been working to educate myself on the issue of gun violence.

I urge you to pass this bill to ban ghost guns. I also encourage you to support other gun safety measures, such as raising the legal age to purchase assault weapons, and restricting guns in sensitive areas. Again, I would like to remind you that firearms are the leading cause of death for children today. In addition, so far this year, there have been over 100 mass shootings in America. There is no denying that gun

violence is a huge problem in our country. The question is: are we going to do something about it?

My grandfather fought in WWII and suffered from PTSD for the rest of his life. Yes, he used guns to defend himself and his country, and yes, I'm grateful that he did. And yet, I feel that if he were alive today, he would be so upset that his great grandchildren were going to school in conditions that sometimes feel like a warzone. What was he fighting for if not for the ability of his family and future generations to live in peace and security. Right now, my daughter sometimes wakes up in the middle of the night because of nightmares about snakes, but I can reassure her that there are no dangerous snakes anywhere near her, and she need not worry. I am not looking forward to the day of her first lockdown drill in school. Because how will I reassure her then? She is a really smart kid. And its only a matter of time before she figures things out. I find this state of affairs completely unacceptable and I hope that you do too. Please work on passing these bills to limit future gun violence. Citizens like myself are depending on it.

Sincerely,

Kyle Belleque