

Submitter: Leslee Lucas
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB2006

Until last year when we sold our place to a younger generation of the family, my husband and I had raised our family as well as hay, sheep, and horses on our farm for over 40 years here in Oregon and in Montana before that. We have owned guns for all those years and more. Guns are a tool on a ranch.

I am writing in support of HB 2006 because the topic of letting children own semi-automatic fire arms invariably brings up a vivid memory for me. It involves overhearing the conversation of the high school boys working hay crew for us one summer. While loading hay into the barn I heard one of the boys bragging to his buddies about driving his truck into the ditch the weekend before while driving drunk. Then within minutes he was talking about his hopes of getting an assault rifle for his birthday at the end of the month. These were good boys working hard but also boys who didn't even think to question whether a gun originally intended as a military weapon belonged in the hands of someone too young to take safely driving a motor vehicle seriously.

Way back when we started our family working on a cow/ calf ranch in Montana the word rifle meant a tool appropriate to it's intended practical uses and the traditional sports founded on self-sufficiency and care of the natural world that is our home. Sadly that is not the world our children are being raised in anymore. And it is not true of semi-automatic firearms whose original purpose, current history, and mythology has no connection to that tradition. They are not a safe and sensible tool for adolescents who are still maturing cognitively and are still forming their version of identity, responsibility and consequences.