



Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen & Wallan, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Erica Bailey. I am a registered nurse and a Commissioner on the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA).

It is with gratitude that I submit this testimony on behalf of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs) – the Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW), Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA), Oregon Commission for Hispanic Affairs (OCHA) and the Oregon Commission for Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs– to urge the Committee to support the passage of House Bills 2005, 2006, and 2007. Each bill, respectively, will prohibit ghost guns and other untraceable firearms, raise the age for purchasing and possessing semiautomatic firearms, and allow local governments to regulate firearms in sensitive areas in Oregon.

Each Commission works for the implementation and establishment of social, political, economic, and legal equity for their constituent populations in the state of Oregon. Each Commission has several statutory duties, all of which revolve around advocacy and equity.

Gun violence is a significant issue that disproportionately affects communities of color in the United States. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2022), people of color are more likely to be victims of gun violence and are also more likely to die due to gun violence. The consequences of gun violence in communities of color are devastating. In addition to the physical harm caused by shootings, gun violence can lead to long-term trauma, mental health issues, and economic instability. It can tear families and communities apart and create a sense of fear and helplessness. The availability of guns in these communities also increases the risk of accidental shootings and suicides, which are also more common among people of color.

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It is imperative that we prohibit the use of undetectable firearms, or ghost guns, as called for in **HB 2005**. A ghost gun is a *do-it-yourself*, homemade gun made from easy-to-get materials that can be purchased without background checks or questions. These guns are increasingly a weapon of choice for gun traffickers and people prohibited from possessing firearms. Oregon has no laws restricting or prohibiting ghost guns. According to *The Oregonian* (2022), federal officials raided a man's house in Salem and found 68 ghost guns, along with dozens of frames and receivers lacking serial numbers.

The dangers of undetectable firearms include increased risk of gun violence, difficulty in tracking firearms, and lack of accountability. Ghost guns even put law enforcement officers at an increased risk of harm, as they may not be aware of the presence of a concealed, undetectable firearm. Overall, the dangers of undetectable firearms are significant, and efforts must be made to regulate their manufacture and sale to reduce their risks to public safety.


HB 2006 calls for raising the minimum age to buy a semi-automatic rifle from 18 to 21. Under current law, an 18-to-20-year-old in Oregon can buy assault weapons and other semiautomatic rifles—even though they cannot legally purchase handguns. Research shows that individuals aged 18-to-20 years old commit gun homicides at a rate nearly three times greater than adults 21 and over (Everytown Support Fund, 2023). Raising the minimum age from 18 to 21 could help prevent gun violence and keep firearms out of the hands of individuals who may be more prone to impulsive or violent behavior due to their still developing pre-frontal cortex.

Under current law, people with concealed carry licenses can carry firearms in public buildings where guns are otherwise prohibited. **HB 2007** would give local governments the authority to make the public safety decision to prohibit all firearms on municipal property if they so choose. Prohibiting guns in public buildings can help reduce the risk of gun violence and increase safety for occupants. This can be particularly important in facilities where large numbers of people gather, such as schools or government buildings. Prohibiting guns in public buildings can also encourage the implementation of improved security measures, such as metal detectors or security personnel, to ensure that guns are not brought into the building. This can help deter potential perpetrators of gun violence and make occupants feel more secure. Prohibiting guns in public buildings can also help reduce the risk of accidents involving firearms. For example, in schools where children are present, the risk of accidental firearm discharge or theft of a firearm is reduced when guns are prohibited.

There needs to be a concerted effort to reduce gun violence across all communities in Oregon. This includes implementing common-sense gun control measures such as those



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provided in HBs 2005, 2006, and 2007. Restricting undetectable firearms, raising the minimum age for purchase and possession of semiautomatic weapons, and restricting firearm possession in public buildings can help prevent the proliferation of guns and reduce the likelihood of gun-related incidents. By promoting safer gun ownership and reducing access to firearms, gun control can help protect the lives and well-being of all Oregonians, particularly people of color, who are often most vulnerable to gun violence.

We must take a strong stand in favor of common-sense gun legislation. We, the undersigned Commissioners, urge you to vote yes on House Bills 2005, 2006, and 2007.

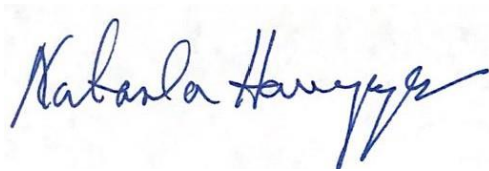
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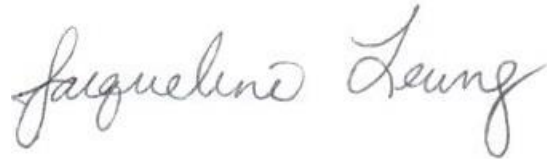
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1. Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). (2022). *Vital Signs: Changes in Firearm Homicide and Suicide Rates — United States, 2019–2020*. Available at https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7119e1.htm?s_cid=mm7119e1_w
2. Everytown Support Fund. (2023). *Has the state raised the minimum age for purchasing firearms?* Retrieved from <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/minimum-age-to-purchase/>
3. The Oregonian. (2022, Mar. 18) *'Massive' ghost guns manufacturing operation found in Oregon raid, feds say*. Retrieved from <https://www.oregonlive.com/crime/2022/03/salem-man-accused-of-selling-homemade-ghost-guns-and-trafficking-fentanyl-inexchange-for-guns-feds-say.html>.



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