



28 March 2023

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Committee Members:

My name is Jenn Fraga, and I am representing the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide to speak in support of HB 3513. According to the CDC from 2016 to 2020, we lost an average of 440 Oregonians annually to suicide by firearm. This bill will help us to shift that tragic trend; in fact, research consistently shows that creating time and distance between a person and a gun during a time of crisis is a lifesaving intervention.



The Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide is a statewide advisory group to the Oregon Health Authority. We are subject matter experts, state leaders, young adults, and suicide attempt and loss survivors from around the state. We work closely with local suicide prevention coalitions across the state. The role of the Alliance is to advise OHA on all matters related to youth and young adult suicide.

The Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide is a statewide advisory to the Oregon Health Authority. Our role is to advise on the state's 5-year Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan which covers ages 5-24. We represent stakeholders across the state including subject matter experts, state leaders, regional suicide prevention coalitions, young people, and suicide loss and attempt survivors. Along with my role as program coordinator for the Alliance, I also speak today as a suicide attempt survivor, a person who lives with a mental health diagnosis, and a person who grew up in a household with firearms and a family who taught me about gun safety.

HB 3513 was developed with extensive input from the firearm community. The Alliance's Lethal Means Safety Committee has heard multiple times from firearm owners that they want to help friends and family who are experiencing a suicidal crisis, but due to concerns regarding liability or lack of access to safe storage, many hesitate to do so. This legislation addresses many of the obstacles firearm owners have identified to helping a friend or family member by holding a firearm for them. Additionally, it also requires that training course for concealed handgun license include use of firearm hold agreements for firearm suicide prevention.

Suicide is preventable. According to Thomas Joiner, there are three elements that are present when someone is at the highest risk for a suicide attempt: 1. Perceived burdensomeness; 2. Low belongingness; and 3. The capability for suicide. HB 3513 will address the third risk factor – the capability for suicide which refers to someone's ability to both harm themselves due to the ready access of lethal means.

While it can take multiple life events over time to build up to a crisis, the suicidal crisis itself may be relatively short from just minutes to hours. Many who have survived suicide attempts have said that the time that passed between making the decision to attempt and the act of attempting was less than 10 minutes. Legislation like HB 3513 can help fill this gap by creating time and distance between a person in crisis and a gun by providing opportunities for people to store their firearms with a trusted friend or outside of the home when they feel a crisis is building.

Please support HB3515.

On behalf of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide,

Jenn Fraga, MSW, CSWA  
Program Coordinator, Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide