

Submitter: Stephanie Hamilton
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Stephanie Hamilton and I live in SW Portland.

I urge you to renew Oregon's \$15 million Community Violence Intervention fund, administered by DOJ's Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division, in the budget.

Last year, Oregon appropriated \$15 million to these services for the very first time, and we know there is already more demand than funding available. Funding is set to expire in 2024. If we want to reduce gun violence over the long term, we can't make a one-time investment; we have to make a sustained commitment to strategies we know work to reduce violence.

Grants support evidence-informed programs across the state of Oregon that address many different types of gun violence, from street-based outreach to reducing homicides in Multnomah County to veteran suicide prevention programs in Eastern and Southern Oregon.

You can drive anywhere in this city and see how in need people are of vital services that help prevent them from being in crisis situations. And what you can't see on the streets in front of you, you can see in the eyes of the people you walk by daily. People are suffering here, really suffering. Suffering creates desperation. And when someone is desperate - whether it is for food, shelter, money, love, etc., they will not typically use good judgement. Not because they choose to - this is how our brains work in desperation. They will hurt themselves or others. We cannot keep living in this mythological construct of pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We are a relational species and need one another to shoulder the hard times. We all deserve that.

Thank you for supporting these live-saving programs in the state budget.

Stephanie Hamilton, Portland OR