

Dear Members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Stephanie Pietz and I live in Tigard OR.

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 reduce homicides in Multnomah County to veteran suicide prevention programs in Eastern and Southern Oregon.

I grew up in a world where it was safe to go out to community events. I never thought twice about going to the Oregon Fair or a festival at the waterfront. I have an almost two year old little boy. When we as a family make plans to go to the Zoo or a fair, any public event, my second consideration is "Will someone open fire on the crowd? Will my kid be safe?" Any time I want to go to an event with my son, I think of the 4th of July Highland Park shooting in 2022 in Illinois. A two year old boy was found calling for his parents, covered in blood. His parents dead were shoot to death. In front of their baby.

That shooting was described as appearing to be "very random (and) very intentional". America is becoming a nightmare. Random intentional mass murder. It's not safe for school children to go to school. It's not safe for family to go to parade. It's not safe to be anywhere where there is a crowd of people. What have we become? What is the next generation going to live though? They already have bullet proof backpacks.

Mass shootings do not need to be an inevitable element of American life. Just like all other tragic forms of gun violence, we can prevent them through common-sense policy solutions. Violence intervention programs provide evidence and community-informed, comprehensive support to individuals who are at greatest risk of gunshot victimization. These programs are shown to reduce gunshot woundings and deaths in the neighborhoods most impacted by gun violence. Please renew Oregon's \$15 million Community Violence Intervention fund.

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

Stephanie Pietz, Tigard OR