

Submitter: John Bartley
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1503

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

My name is John E. Bartley, III. I am a resident of Washington County and currently serve as a precinct committeeperson of the Democratic Party of Oregon. I write today in support of SB 1503 and to urge its passage along with HB 4096.

The Oregon Health Authority tells us three out of four Oregon gun deaths are suicides.

I believe SB 1503, which would set up a Task Force to prevent Gun Violence and Suicide, is an important step to reduce that. The need for funding for research into gun violence and suicide prevention is particularly grave so your decisions can be guided by fact, so I ask the Task Force also include members of the shooting community, since they can provide insight that persons outside the shooting community might not have. As a former teacher, I think it should also include someone with experience in teaching gun safety to young people.

Making a task force and funding research is necessary but won't solve the problem alone. There is more work that can be done, and the Legislature has an opportunity to do that work by also passing HB 4096. HB 4096 allows gun sellers to hold firearms temporarily, to give a gun owner another easy path towards creating time and distance between themselves and a firearm. This can be done for any change in circumstances, including a mental health crisis, but also due to military deployment, natural disaster, or any other situation when keeping one's guns outside the home is wise. Unlike "red flag" laws, these holds would be entirely voluntary, done by the gun owner, instead of by court order.

Hundreds of Oregonians died by suicide by firearm since you last met. Even one is too many, and we cannot let another year go by without making available this important and entirely voluntary solution. We believe that these steps, which the legislature can take this year, will save lives this year.

For this reason, I respectfully request you move to pass both SB 1503 and HB 4096.