

Tiago Moreno

Tuesday, February 6th, 2024

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tiago Moreno, and I am a high school senior in Portland, Oregon. I'm writing today to express my support for SB1503: Task Force on Gun Violence and Suicide Prevention. This bill presents an opportunity to address the alarming loss of life in Oregon due to firearms, and I urge you to take it.

Currently, Oregon suffers from a reprehensible loss of life to firearms — close to 600 deaths annually. This issue disproportionately affects vulnerable members of our communities, making guns the leading cause of death for children and teens. In 2021, 95 young lives were lost to suicide, with half being the result of firearms. In another disturbing statistic, Black individuals are ten times more likely to die from homicide than their white counterparts. Moreover, rural communities in Oregon experience a 2.5x higher rate of firearm suicide than urban areas, and our veteran suicide rate surpasses the national average by 37%.

The loss of lives to firearms is a preventable issue, and SB1503 offers a crucial step in the right direction.

While I have been fortunate enough to avoid direct threats from firearms —excusing lockdowns due to nearby, known threats with firearms—, it is imperative for me to advocate for the prevention of such loss of life. Youth should not have to bear the responsibility for addressing this issue, especially in place of adults in our communities who have elected to succumb to the influence of corporate lobbying. It is unjust for children to endure school shooting drills and fear of public spaces due to a national reluctance to prioritize lives over firearms. SB1503 provides an opportunity to rectify this situation and reassert the importance of human lives. I urge you all to seize this chance.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony on this issue.

Failure to act is ultimately a resignation to let our fellow humans die from firearms. That is unacceptable. By taking action now, this legislature can unequivocally reject this resignation, potentially saving hundreds of lives.

Sincerely,
Tiago Moreno

Signatories:

Simone Doumerc, 7th grade

Thea Yeager, 12th grade

Sharanya Sannidhi, 11th grade

Diya Shah, 11th

Eli Walchli, 12th grade