

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today in support of SB 1503, the Task Force bill on gun violence prevention and firearm suicide prevention.

As a mother and grandmother, I care deeply about this issue. It pains me that my grandkids have to worry about going to school because they fear being shot. I care deeply that my grandchild was threatened in Portland last year by a person sporting a shot gun while they were driving in their neighborhood. I also care that young people who may not have the maturity to make informed decisions about suicide can easily access guns. We desperately need education and prevention efforts statewide to prevent needless accidents and acts of violence.

Every year, we lose close to 600 Oregonians to preventable firearm deaths. Black Oregonians are roughly 10 times more likely than white people to die by firearm homicide. And the firearm suicide rate in rural Oregon is 2.5 times higher than in urban areas and the state's veteran suicide rate is 37% higher than the national average.

I strongly support the SB1503, Task Force bill, and urge the Task Force to prioritize prevention efforts that are centered around those most impacted by gun deaths and shootings, as well as firearm suicides. I urge the Task Force to analyze and prioritize ongoing, sustainable funding for efforts for prevention work that is making the most meaningful, equitable impact, both for homicide and suicide prevention.

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

Sincerely,  
Lita Colligan  
Mother, Grandmother, Friend  
Milwaukie, Oregon