



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE: March 22, 2025

TO: Chair Prozanski, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Jaime Peterson, MD, MPH
On behalf of the Oregon Pediatric Society

SUBJECT: Support for SB 243: Preventing Gun Violence

My name is Dr. Jaime Peterson, and I am a pediatrician and member of the Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS), the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am writing to offer my and OPS' full support for Senate Bill 243 and its important provisions, aimed at preventing gun violence and protecting the health and safety of our children.

As a pediatrician, I have the privilege and responsibility of caring for children at stages of development from infancy through adolescence. Over the years, I have seen firsthand the tragic consequences of gun violence. What pains me most is the growing number of children and adolescents whose lives are lost or forever altered because of firearms. Gun violence is not just a political issue — it is a public health crisis that directly affects the wellbeing of our youngest and most vulnerable.

To highlight a shocking and heartbreaking fact: guns are a leading cause of accidental death among young children in the United States. This includes toddlers who are unintentionally shot because firearms are improperly stored or left within reach. These deaths are preventable, and we, as a society, must do everything in our power to protect children from this danger.

Senate Bill 243 addresses several key aspects of gun safety, and we strongly support each of its provisions:

1. Banning Rapid-Fire Devices (Bump Stocks, Sears, & Glock Switches)

Rapid-fire devices, such as bump stocks and sears, dramatically increase the lethality of firearms. These devices can turn semi-automatic weapons into something far more dangerous, allowing for rapid, uncontrollable firing. This escalates the risk of mass shootings and the likelihood of injury or death. By banning these devices, we are taking a proactive step in preventing such violence, especially in public spaces where children and families are present.

2. Raising the Age to 21 for Purchase/Ownership of Semi-Automatic Rifles



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

Evidence shows that young people, particularly those under 21, are disproportionately involved in firearm-related incidents. By raising the age to 21 for the purchase and ownership of semi-automatic rifles, matching the laws for handguns, we are ensuring that these powerful weapons do not fall into the hands of those who developmentally may not be fully prepared for the responsibility of gun ownership, or who may be more prone to impulsive and violent actions. This change will help reduce the number of tragedies, particularly in our schools and communities.

3. Creating a 72-Hour Waiting Period to Purchase a Firearm

A mandatory waiting period of 72 hours before purchasing a firearm provides a critical opportunity for reflection and, potentially, intervention. In moments of crisis or emotional distress, people may act impulsively, and this waiting period can be the difference between life and death. For young adults, in particular, it offers a brief but crucial pause in the decision-making process, which can prevent impulsive violence, suicide, or tragic accidents.

As a pediatrician, I am committed to ensuring that every child in Oregon has the opportunity to grow up in a safe and healthy environment. The provisions outlined in SB 243 align with this mission. They are not about restricting Second Amendment rights; they are about protecting the most vulnerable members of our society — our children. These measures will help prevent tragedies like accidental shootings, mass shootings, and violent crimes from becoming part of our children's reality.

I urge you to support SB 243 and take a stand for the health and safety of Oregon's children. This is an issue of life and death, and together, we can help prevent further heartbreak and loss.

Thank you for your time and consideration.