



# Oregon Pediatric Society

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

DATE: March 23, 2025

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

FROM: Diane Lucas, MD, PhD  
Member of the Oregon Pediatric Society

SUBJECT: Support for SB 243: Preventing Gun Violence

My name is Dr. Diane Lucas, 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 in strong support of Senate Bill 243, aimed at preventing gun violence and protecting the health and safety of our children.

Before I moved to Oregon, I lived not far from Littleton, Colorado. There, as we know, in 1999, two age-18 adolescents massacred 13 students and a teacher with a semi-automatic weapon and a sawed-off shotgun at Columbine High School, before killing themselves. I drove past Littleton on the way to work. I cared for patients from Littleton. I will never forget that day. And I think it is safe to say that Littleton never fully recovered.

The Columbine massacre unleashed a flood of school shootings and other mass killings that to this day has not abated.

Today, a group of friends and I spent the day praying and anxiously awaiting news on the fate of the 16-year-old son of a friend who is in the ICU fighting for his life after having been shot in Portland last night.

The truth is, we do not want to live like this. And we do not have to live like this, because now you, honorable Senate Committee Members, have the power to advance SB 243, which will take steps to slow down and restrict adolescents' access to weapons, including weapons of war. As a pediatrician who has had enough of gun violence, I urge you, and I plead with you, to do just that.

The late adolescent of age 18, 19, or 20, simply does not have enough brain maturity to fully understand the implications and potential consequences of their thoughts and actions. For the same reason that we do not allow three-year-olds to play with guns, we should not allow 18, 19, or 20-year-olds to own or purchase weapons of war: they are prone to impulsivity and less developed critical decision making.



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All too often in our society, an adolescent's anger or other emotional regulation problems end with grabbing a weapon and shooting someone, or as many people as possible. Often no one is present to help mitigate, or is even aware of, the adolescent's emotional turmoil. For this reason, in such tragic circumstances, both the 72-hour waiting period for gun purchases and ban on rapid-fire devices featured in SB 243 will help to curtail deaths from firearm violence.

We are losing far too many of our children and youth to gun violence. Gun violence is now the leading cause of death of CHILDREN. This is insane and it has to stop. We must do everything we can to curtail child and adolescent access to all guns. And if we do not, who is responsible? We adults are responsible.

Thank you for doing everything in your power to help stem the tragic loss of our children to gun violence. Please work to advance SB 243. Thank you.