

To: Oregon Senate Interim Committee on Judiciary

Date: March 29, 2025

Re: In SUPPORT of SB 243-1

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

On behalf of Lift Every Voice Oregon, I submit this testimony in support of SB 243-1. We urge you to pass this bill out of the Committee with a recommendation for passage by the full Senate.

Since the inception of Lift Every Voice Oregon (LEVO) in 2018, I have served in many capacities, primarily as Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee.

LEVO was formed within weeks of the horrific shooting in Parkland Florida, ending in the death of 14 students and 3 staff, as well as injuring 17 more individuals.

The goals of LEVO have centered on bringing common sense evidence-based changes in Oregon law that will be the most effective in reducing gun violence.

We brought Measure 114 to the people and they approved three such changes (a permit to purchase, a ban on large-capacity magazines and requiring successful passage of a background check before receiving a firearm). Courts on both the state and federal level have held those changes to be constitutionally permissible.

Those are now codified, and we expect they will be implemented soon. The provisions of SB 243-1 provide valuable complementary provisions to Measure 114's provisions and together they will result in a more effective deterrent to gun violence in Oregon.

LEVO strongly supports SB 243-1 and believes each of the changes it would bring to Oregon are important. In this testimony, we focus on two of the provisions that directly enhance the goals in Measure 114; namely, the minimum age and 72-hour waiting period.

Providing a minimum age of 21 for purchase of semi-automatic weapons recognizes that the development of brains is gradual and not complete until young adults are in their mid-twenties or later. It is not a coincidence that the number of mass shootings committed by youth under 21 is disproportionately high. The same is true of suicides among youth. And, tragically, gun deaths is also the number one cause of death among youth aged 0 - 19. The age requirement

provided under SB 243-1 applied to semi-automatic weapons is an abundantly common-sense step. It does not prohibit youth from learning about gun safety and even use of some firearms, such as single shot rifles often used for hunting. The limit, instead, delays the time for exposure to the more powerful and deadly semi-automatic weapons. The existing nationally invoked age restriction of 21 years old only applies to handguns. Allowing youth to access semiautomatic firearms but not handguns offers a dangerous incentive for youth to more readily choose a weapon that can cause greater harm to a larger number of people. This is utterly illogical. Passing SB 243-1 presents the opportunity for each of the members of this Committee to take action to eliminate this dangerous incentive and reduce the tragic loss of life among our youth and caused by our youth.

Coupled with the permit to purchase process of Measure 114, dealers will be assured that purchasers have already proven they are 21 years old. The permit will bear a photograph and is not issued until the applicant has passed a comprehensive FBI background check, based on fingerprints. It is hard to conceive of a way for an applicant under 21 to complete that process with false identification or otherwise. The applicant will also have gone through a training program, including knowledge about the prevention of abuse and misuse of firearms, as well as safe hands-on use of a firearm. Thus, dealers selling a semi-automatic gun will be able to enforce the age requirement, confident that the purchaser is at least 21 years old and has had training about the dangerous nature of such a weapon. By passing SB 243-1, legislators will have taken a responsible step toward making Oregon safer by ensuring that purchasers of semi-automatic firearms meet at least minimal qualifications. SB 243-1 and Measure 114 work in sync to achieve these important outcomes.

A second important provision of SB 243-1 is to require a 72-hour waiting period until the purchaser receives the firearm. The 72-hour period starts when the request for the background check is made by the dealer to the state police and runs at least 72 hours. The firearm cannot be released until two conditions have been met: (1) 72 hours have elapsed; **and** (2) the dealer has received a unique approval number from the state indicating the purchaser has passed the background check. This delay has been shown in evidence-based studies to intervene and prevent abuse of the gun to harm the purchaser and/or others, as

presented in the testimony of many others before this Committee. The Committee has also heard testimony of the tragedies that have resulted that very likely would have been avoided if this law had been in place. This waiting period provision also works hand in hand with the changes in the law under Measure 114. It closed a dangerous loophole which allowed transfer of the gun to a purchaser after 3 days, even if the background check was not completed. The 72 hours provided under SB 243-1 is sufficient to complete the check, in the vast majority of cases. But the two laws together make sure that no person will receive a gun until 72 hours has passed and the background check is completed.

The permit to purchase provision in Measure 114 also is designed to enhance the speed of the background check by conducting a thorough check even before the permit is issued. That delay should provide time and opportunity to clear up any inconsistencies. For example, delays are often caused by out-of-state records not being available related to some charge. Since the permit application may take up to 30 days, there should be time to obtain those records and resolve any mistakes or inconsistencies. The applicant could in fact use that time to take the initiative to get the necessary records. Once a purchaser has been issued a permit, which is valid for five years, the applicant should be able to clear the pre-purchase background checks over the next five years more quickly, most likely in the 72-hour waiting period. This two-tiered system may also smooth and even expedite the State Police processing of the routine pre-purchase background checks.

In sum, SB 243-1 and Measure 114 provisions work together to create a smooth system of ensuring firearm purchasers have passed a background check before they receive a firearm.

The other provisions of SB 243-1 are also important safeguards and LEVO supports them. With passage of SB 243-1 and its implementation along with Measure 114, as soon as the court stay is lifted, Oregon will be a safer place to live and work.

On behalf of the Chief Petitioners of Lift Every Voice Oregon and the Leadership Core Team, we thank the Committee members for their diligent work. We welcome you to contact our organization if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth McKanna
Legislative Co-Chair
Lift Every Voice Oregon

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