

Submitter: Stephanie Berman
On Behalf Of: self
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4145

As a Portland resident, a mother, and a physician, I am writing to strongly express my support for HB 4145.

Stronger gun laws are consistently associated with significantly lower firearm suicide rates and reduced overall firearm deaths. While there are many compelling health and safety reasons to strengthen gun regulations, I also want to highlight a striking imbalance in how we address risks to children: the public and policymakers devote far more attention to regulating social media than to preventing firearm-related harm. Yet the facts tell a different story:

--> Guns are the number one cause of death for children and teens in the United States, surpassing motor vehicle accidents.

--> A child or teenager is injured by a gun about every 40 minutes.

--> Children living in homes with firearms face twice the risk of homicide and three times the risk of suicide.

By contrast, social media—while certainly capable of contributing to conflict and escalating violence—does not present an immediate physical threat. It may catalyze offline disputes, including those that tragically lead to shootings, but it is not itself a lethal instrument.

[cdc.gov]

Bottom line: Guns pose an immediate and deadly risk to children. Social media may amplify harmful dynamics, but it is not a physical weapon. Our policy priorities should reflect this difference in urgency and potential for harm.

For these reasons, I urge you to advance HB 4145 and take meaningful steps toward protecting Oregon's children and families.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to public safety.