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Testimony of Liddy Renner, Senior Manager, State Policy, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
Support for HB 4145 Before the Senate Committee on Rules
February 27th, 2026

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Starr, and Distinguished Members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Rules,

Founded in 1974, Brady works to change the law, change the industry, and change culture to free America from gun violence. Our organization today carries the name of Jim Brady, who was shot and severely injured in the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan. Jim and his wife, Sarah, led the fight to pass federal legislation requiring background checks for gun sales. Brady continues to uphold Jim and Sarah's legacy by uniting Americans across the country in the fight to prevent gun violence.

When Oregonians voted on Ballot Measure 114, they showed this legislature that they overwhelmingly support evidence-based policies to stymie the ongoing gun violence emergency within the State. **Brady encourages legislators to support HB 4145, which allows for the implementation of the firearm purchase permitting process in Oregon. This will save lives, create a barrier to gun trafficking, and prevent gun violence before it happens.**

Firearm Permit Laws are Proven Effective

Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have implemented legislation requiring individuals to obtain a permit or license before purchasing certain firearms, with many more proposing bills similar to HB 4145 in this year's state legislative sessions.¹ Requiring permits for gun purchases is an essential component of comprehensive gun violence prevention legislation that creates a thorough system by which potential purchasers are vetted in order to obtain a firearm. Permitting systems increase the efficacy of background checks by mandating that prospective firearm purchasers interact with an agent of the state in order to verify their identity in addition to the standard background check conducted through NICS. This interface requirement helps to deter individuals who could be trying to acquire a gun to harm themselves or others

¹ Giffords. (n.d.). *Licensing laws are safety measures proven to promote safe gun ownership and reduce gun deaths*. Giffords Law Center. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/owner-responsibilities/licensing/>

and also prevent individuals who are attempting to assist in firearm trafficking by purchasing a gun for another person in a “straw sale.”²

There is compelling statistical evidence that firearm permitting laws like HB 4145 are effective at reducing both firearm homicide and suicide. Research evaluating the effect of the implementation of Connecticut’s permit-to-purchase law for handguns shows that the law was associated with a 40 percent reduction in the firearm homicide rate in Connecticut in the first decade following enactment.³ Another recent study analyzed the effects of permit-to-purchase laws on homicide in 136 large, urban U.S. counties from 1984 to 2015, with researchers finding that permit-to-purchase laws were associated with a 14 percent reduction in firearm homicide in urban counties over the 32-year period.⁴ Further research has also found that states with permit to purchase laws help to stem firearm injuries and deaths in states that surround them, creating safer communities within and beyond state boundaries.⁵ This law will have a concrete, measurable impact on the firearms homicide crisis that continues to plague cities in Oregon like Portland, and create a safer and more secure environment for all Oregonians.

In addition to helping ameliorate firearms homicide, requiring individuals to obtain a permit to purchase a handgun will help to reduce firearm suicide. When individuals consider self-harm, the ability to quickly and easily access the method of harm plays a major role in whether that attempt is made, and in the case of firearms, the likelihood of it ending fatally. Firearms permit laws provide for a time frame between the application for a permit for a firearm and the purchase and possession of that weapon, thus putting a temporary barrier between the impulse to harm oneself and being able to easily carry it out. Again, the evidence shows how effective these laws are in this realm. The implementation of Connecticut’s permit to purchase law was associated with a 15 percent reduction in firearm suicide rates.⁶ This is consistent with evidence showing that restricting *immediate* access to highly lethal means is effective in preventing death by suicide.⁷ Firearms are the most lethal method frequently used in suicide deaths: studies show that 90 percent of those who attempt suicide with a firearm will die, while other methods such as drug ingestion are fatal in less than 2 percent of cases.⁸

² Samuels, A., Hoffman, C. (June 13, 2019). *Handgun licensing more effective at reducing gun deaths than background checks alone*. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2019/handgun-licensing-more-effective-at-reducing-gun-deaths-than-background-checks-alone>

³ Rudolph, K. E., Stuart, E. A., Vernick, J. S., et al. (2015). Association between Connecticut's permit-to-purchase handgun law and homicides. *American journal of public health, 105*(8), e49–e54. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302703>.

⁴ Crifasi, C. K., Merrill-Francis, M., McCourt, A., et al. (2018). Association between firearm laws and homicide in urban counties. *Journal of urban health : bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, 95*(3), 383–390. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-018-0273-3>.

⁵ Liu, Y., Siegel, M., & Sen, B. (2022). Association of state-level firearm-related deaths with firearm laws in neighboring states. *JAMA Network Open, 5*(11), e2240750. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.40750>.

⁶ Crifasi, C. K., Meyers, J. S., Vernick, J. S., et al. (2015). Effects of changes in permit-to-purchase handgun laws in Connecticut and Missouri on suicide rates. *Preventive medicine, 79*, 43–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2015.07.013>

⁷ Lubin, G., Werbeloff, N., Halperin, D., et al. (2010). Decrease in suicide rates after a change of policy reducing access to firearms in adolescents: a naturalistic epidemiological study. *Suicide & life-threatening behavior, 40*(5), 421–424. <https://doi.org/10.1521/suli.2010.40.5.421>

⁸ Conner, A., Azrael, D., & Miller, M. (2019). Suicide case-fatality rates in the United States, 2007 to 2014: a nationwide population-based study. *Annals of internal medicine, 171*(12), 885–895. <https://doi.org/10.7326/M19-1324>

Not only is there convincing evidence that implementation of firearm permitting laws is associated with reductions in firearm homicide and suicide, research also shows that the opposite is true – in 2007, Missouri repealed its permit-to-purchase handgun law, which required all handgun purchasers to obtain a license verifying that they had passed a background check. According to an analysis by researchers that controlled for changes in policing, incarceration, burglaries, unemployment, poverty, and other state laws adopted during the study period that could affect violent crime, the repeal of the law contributed to a 23 percent increase in Missouri’s firearm homicide rate and was associated with an additional 55 to 63 homicides per year in Missouri between 2008 and 2012.⁹ Additionally, the repeal of Missouri’s permitting law was associated with a 16 percent increase in firearm suicide rates.¹⁰ Where these laws have been implemented and where they have been repealed, the results are stark and speak for themselves.

What HB 4145 will do

HB 4145 bill contains necessary technical fixes to strong gun violence policies that this committee has already thoughtfully debated and voted on. Further, permitting systems like the one addressed by HB 4145 have been consistently upheld by courts throughout the country. Effective permitting systems have also been shown to deter individuals who could be trying to acquire a gun to harm themselves or others, and also prevent individuals who are attempting to assist in firearm trafficking by purchasing a gun for another person in a straw sale.¹¹ Additional research indicates that states with permit-to-purchase laws help to stem firearm injuries and deaths in states that surround them, creating safer communities within and beyond state boundaries.¹²

With a firearm suicide rate nearly 40% higher than the national average, Oregon is facing a crisis. The gun death rate in the state increased by 21% from 2014-2023, and while white males over the age of 34 accounted for 23% of the population in OR, they accounted for 58% of all gun suicide deaths in 2023. Finally, there were 489 gun suicides in OR in 2023. Permit to purchase laws have proven effective in saving lives from firearm suicide by providing a cooling off period for those seeking to harm themselves or others.¹³

Conclusion

The efficacy of strong permitting systems is backed by data and these systems have been proven to reduce homicide, suicide, and gun trafficking. HB 4145 makes simple technical changes to ensure that the will of

⁹ Webster, D., Crifasi, C. K., & Vernick, J. S. (2014). Effects of the repeal of Missouri's handgun purchaser licensing law on homicides. *Journal of urban health : bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 91(2), 293–302. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-014-9865-8>

¹⁰ See footnote 7.

¹¹ Crifasi, C. K., McCourt, A. D., Webster, D., (2019). The Impact of Handgun Purchaser Licensing on Gun Violence. *Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health*. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2023-11/impact-of-handgun-purchaser-licensing-white-paper-2022a11y.pdf>

¹² Liu, Y., Siegel, M., Sen, B., Association of State-Level Firearm-Related Deaths With Firearm Laws in Neighboring States. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(11):e2240750. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.40750

¹³ Center for Gun Violence Solutions, (last accessed February 2026). State Data: Oregon. *Johns Hopkins University*. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/data/state-gun-violence-data/oregon>

Oregonians can be properly implemented and that lives can be saved. For the reasons stated above, Brady strongly urges a favorable report of this bill.

Sincerely,

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