From:	Rebecca Cohen
To:	DeJong Annola; Sen Prozanski
Subject:	Written Testimony in Favor of Senate Bills 347 and 700
Date:	Thursday, April 04, 2013 9:45:52 PM

Dear Chair Prozanski and Committee Members,

My name is Rebecca Cohen and I am the mother and step-mother of three daughters in Portland. My youngest is 7 years old, the same age as the victims of the Newtown massacre. I can't look at their photos without seeing my own daughter, and vice versa.

My family has been touched directly by gun violence. I lost an uncle nearly 30 years ago when a disgruntled employee shot and killed him.

I'm respectfully asking for your support for safer gun laws in Oregon, particularly Senate Bills 700 and 347. I hope these are just the first of many common-sense efforts regulating firearms as sensibly as other potentially dangerous products, like automobiles or prescription narcotics. Used correctly and governed by sensible laws, these are all useful tools. But in careless or destructive hands, they can and do kill many people. Two of these are well regulated, and one is not.

I simply ask for firearms to be covered by the same type of common-sense laws that govern cars and driving: someone who wants to own and drive a car must pass a basic skills test, show legal identification, get insurance, register the car when it's bought, and drive it safely so no one is hurt or killed. These basic measures do not restrict anyone's rights and hugely improve public safety. So should it be with guns.

I appreciate SB 347 keeping guns out of Oregon public schools. Guns have no place in our schools. Our children should not be brought up in an environment of fear and vigilance. We all know the armed-hero/good-guy storyline of the movies, but it is largely fictional; the possibility of children being hurt or killed by guns in their midst is horribly real. Our public schools are underfunded and struggling. In an era where too many teachers are laid off and class sizes are bursting at the seams, our precious education dollars should not go to armed security guards. There were security guards at Virginia Tech and at Columbine. Our well-trained local police forces, funded through public safety instead of at the expense of our education budget, must be the line of defense if an attack happens.

I am also strongly in favor of SB 700 regulating gun sales the same way in all venues. Guns are far too easy to get when they change hands for cash at gun shows. They cheapen human life and they cost us all far too much. Common-sense regulations on firearms that simply regulate the ways they are bought, and hopefully then are more carefully used and stored, do not infringe on anyone's rights, and they will save countless lives.

I was at the capitol today, rallying in support of both of these bills. My representatives, Tina Kotek and Chip Shields, know where I stand on this issue.

Respectfully yours,
Rebecca Cohen

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