

My name is Linnea Prejean. I live in Portland. I am a daughter and I volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I grew up in Newtown, Connecticut – part of which you know of as Sandy Hook. I know from up close and very personal, the impact gun violence has on a community. I watched with horror and grief as my hometown got shoved into the spotlight. My friend had his mother ripped away from him, my best friend's mom had her former colleagues ripped away from her as well. I went to high school with the shooter. Far too many lives were lost that day. That is why I am here to advocate on behalf of SB 797. Whether or not this bill would have prevented what happened in Newtown, this bill will take a huge step toward ensuring that existing gun safety laws are followed.

Background checks should be a pass – fail. The vast majority of background checks in OR are completed instantly, but whether or not our law enforcement authorities are able to meet a tight three-day schedule, Oregonians and residents of neighboring states must not become victims because we have allowed delays in federal records checks to be an excuse to allow people not allowed to purchase firearms from doing just that, from licensed dealers. Even where it takes longer, there is no sensible shortcut. We must give background checks all the time needed. Domestic Abusers, felons and dangerous individuals must not be allowed to unlawfully purchase a gun because of an “incomplete” record check.

While federal law prohibits certain categories of domestic abusers from buying or possessing guns, there are still holes in that law. Dating partners convicted of abuse and convicted stalkers, are not included in those categories. Their exclusion is irrational and inexcusable.

In an average month in the United States, 50 women are shot to death by a current or former partner.

This bill will protect the abused dating partners and victims of stalkers who are not currently protected by our laws.

We need to continue to enforce the background check laws already in place.

And, we can better help our communities, our neighbors and our children by requiring state and local officials to alert law enforcement when an individual prohibited by law from purchasing a firearm attempts to buy one illegally and fails a background check. A study commissioned by the Federal Justice Department that looked at a year of background check failures found that 30 percent of people who failed a background check were re-arrested within five years. Giving such people another chance to purchase firearms and making a failed attempt a crime without consequence is not acceptable.

Passing this bill will save lives and it may prevent another community from being consumed by preventable tragedy. No one should ever have to go through that.

I am proud that Oregon has some good gun sense legislation. I am proud to call Oregon home. Thank you.