

March 13, 2019

Dear Senate Members of the Educational Committee,

My name is Devin Vandenberghe, I am a lifelong Oregonian, and a proud mother to two beautiful boys (ages 11 and 6.) I am writing to you on behalf of my family, as well as the families within our beloved state. I have never written a letter to a Senate Committee but watching the all too common news articles about the gun accidents involving children, which should be hugely preventable, has broken my spirit and my heart. However, "thoughts and prayers" don't cut it do they, we need action, we need solutions. The Kid S.A.F.E. Foundation is a shining beacon towards positive change and I pray that you take action and help make all of our children safer.

Growing up in Oregon I, as an adult, am familiar with guns, I was raised around guns. I was lucky to have the proper guidance and education to understand that they were not toys but rather tools, and there wasn't any mystery or fascination with them. My boys have been a little more sheltered, which is why we chose to participate in the Kid S.A.F.E 'Kids Firearm Safety 1' class this last Fall at our local Cabelas. It was a wonderfully informative class that held the kids' attention while conveying life saving ideas. It gives them the tools to deal with the presence of guns, whether an adult is present, or more importantly when there is not an adult present. It took some of the intrigue away from the machinery, it gave them step by step directions on the actions they would need to take when confronted with a gun.

I had friends who have said to me, "Well we don't own guns, or we don't "believe" in guns, so we wouldn't send our kids to a class like that." I said in response "That is EXACTLY WHY all kids NEED this instruction!" Whether you "believe" in guns or not they exist, whether you like guns or not they are out in the world, if you are afraid of guns you are leaving your kids the most vulnerable because they lack one important thing KNOWLEDGE. The old saying 'Knowledge is power' is absolutely true, this foundation takes a hands on practical approach with the kids, in terms that they understand, how to deal with the situation of finding a gun or being around one. The bottom line is they get the knowledge to disengage, tell somebody, run and tell an adult. It potentially saves lives, period full stop.

The foundation and its education is free to children and their parents. I absolutely think every child in the state should have access to this life saving knowledge and Kid S.A.F.E Foundation is the best delivery system for it.

Thank you for your time and hopefully your support in bringing this to the forefront of importance for our states kids. Let's keep them safe so that we don't have to read one more article about a firearm accident involving one of our precious youth.

Devin Vandenberghe