

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept my written testimony in **strong support** of the provisions outlined in HB4005.

[From the OMA Firearm Injury Prevention section on Safe Storage]

“Safe Storage

Recent purchase of a handgun has been associated with an increased risk of violent death. Safe storage is an important aspect of firearm safety because most guns used for self-harm or unintentional injuries originate from the home of the victim, a friend, or relative. A case-control study found that storage of locked and unloaded guns, plus locked ammunition stored in a separate location each have a protective effect. Relative to firearms that were unlocked and loaded, those stored locked and unloaded were 84% less likely to be involved in a shooting. Oregon does not legally require gun owners to lock or securely store guns when not in use.”

More than 100 people die in our country *every day* from firearm injuries. The age-adjusted firearm fatality rate in Oregon is higher than the national average, as is the percent of firearm deaths due to suicide (82.1%). From 2010 to 2014, 2,280 Oregonians died from firearms, about one person per day. I was part of the Oregon Medical Association’s Firearm Injury Prevention Task Force who published our report in 2019 where we make data-informed recommendations on how to prevent these deaths (cited above). This is a national epidemic, and it is disproportionately impacting Oregonians. ***We must do better.***

As a physician who care for patients in the intensive care unit (ICU), I see survivors of suicide attempts on a regular basis. I do not see survivors of firearm-perpetrated suicide attempts because they do not usually survive to the hospital. Having to unlock a firearm and load a weapon will be enough of a hurdle to dissuade many suicide attempts (and completions). Safe storage is even promoted on the NRA website. This is something most gun owners take very seriously and should be a non-controversial, consensus-driven decision.

Thank you for taking a stand for the safety of all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Maxine Dexter, MD