

Chair Sanchez and members of the committee,

I am writing in favor of HB 4005, the safe storage bill, because gun safety is essential to the safety of Oregon's children. Requiring guns to be locked assures that children cannot accidentally harm themselves or their friends. My biggest reason for supporting this bill is the issue of teen suicide. Oregon's rate of teen suicide is significantly higher than the national average. When a teen is suffering from depression, he or she should be protected from the impulsive behaviors that characterize their developmental level. Suicide facts in Oregon include the following:

Oregon's suicide rate is 20% higher than the national average, and the majority of our suicide deaths are with a firearm.

Fifty-four Oregon children under the age of 18 died by firearm suicide between 2010 and 2015. This is 45% of total suicides among children.

Preventing or delaying access to a firearm saves lives; once that moment of crisis ends, 90% of people do not attempt suicide again. This is particularly the case for children who cannot purchase a gun on their own.

I am the current chair of the Oregon Nurses Association Cabinet on Health Policy. As a nurse, I see the incredible impact of depression and suicide on families in my community. As a state, we should take every opportunity to strengthen laws that improve safety for our children.

Thank you for your service to the state of Oregon and I urge you to pass HB 4005 on to the full house to keep our children safe.

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