

**Written Testimony to be submitted to the Oregon State House of Representatives  
Judiciary Committee in favor of HB 4005.**

**Submitted by Jean S. Carlton on behalf of myself and my husband, Dr. Steven  
Carlton**

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**Bend, OR 97703 (House District 59 and Senate District 30)**

Thank you Representatives for the very hard and significant work you do to ensure quality of life here in Oregon.

**Testimony:** As health care providers we have worked for more than 30 years in our state to save lives. We are vested in the effort to pass this bill because it is a small but critical step to save lives. As legislators, this is a chance for you to save lives. We believe safe gun storage is NOT anti-gun, but rather anti-suicide, anti-gun accident, and anti-gun crime. It is balancing the rights of some with the need to promote safe gun use and protect those who cannot protect themselves.

1 in 5 Americans never lock or secure their guns (1). Clearly these individuals, and the many more who do not consistently secure their guns need incentive to change their practices. Here are four critical goals and (only) some of the evidence to support the fact that safe storage law would provide a rational balance.

**1. ALWAYS: PROTECT OUR CHILDREN**

- **Gun violence is the second highest cause of accidental death in children in Oregon.**
- **70% of accidental shootings of children could be prevented if parents kept their guns locked and separated from ammunition, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.**
- **In 20 school shootings between 1990 and April 2018, 17 of the shooters had obtained the firearms from home.** *Wall Street Journal* February 6, 2020

**2. PREVENT: GUN THEFT WHICH FUELS OTHER CRIMES**

- **An analysis of more than 23,000 stolen firearms recovered by police between 2010 and 2016 found that the majority of these weapons were recovered in connection with crimes, including more than 1,500 violent acts such as murder, kidnapping, and armed robbery.** Brian Freskos, "Missing Pieces: Gun Theft from Legal Gun Owners is on the Rise, Quietly Fueling Violent Crime, *The Trace*, November 20, 2017
- **Unsecured weapons in homes and vehicles are fueling an epidemic of gun thefts across the country. Gun owners who do not safely store their firearms are significantly more likely to have their guns stolen.** David Hemenway, Deborah Azrael, and Matthew Miller, "Whose Guns are Stolen? The Epidemiology of Gun Theft Victims," *Injury Epidemiology* 4, no. 1 (2017).
- **In Oregon between 2012 and 2015, 17, 302 guns were reported stolen with a value of \$7,785, 744.** *Center for American Progress analysis of FBI data.*
- **Parked cars are a prime target for gun thieves, with data from 25 U.S. cities finding that an estimated 4,800 guns were stolen from vehicles in 2015.** *Parsons and Weigend, "Stolen Guns in America."*

**3. SAVE FROM SUICIDE: OREGON HAS AN ALARMINGLY HIGH RATE**

- **In Oregon rural and frontier counties have the highest rates (of suicide), about 23 per 100,000 for the last six years analyzed. Grant, Baker, Lake and Harney counties with highest rates.** *Oregon's State Health Assessment 2018.*
- Nationwide, **60% of all firearm deaths are the result of suicide. In Oregon, this number is even higher at over 80%, with a disproportionately higher rate in rural communities compared to urban. Oregon's age-adjusted suicide rate of 17.7 per 100,000 residents in 2015 was 33 percent higher than the national average and Oregon ranked 13th place among all US states in suicide incidence.** *Oregon Health Authority.*
- Evidence from studies over the past two decades shows **a strong association between the presence of a firearm in the home and an increased risk of suicide for the gun owner and the gun owner's spouse and children.** *Series of studies inc. Azrael and Miller (2016)*
- **Compared with people who stored their firearms unlocked and/or loaded, those who stored their firearms safely were less likely to die by firearm suicide.**Edmond D. Shenassa, Michelle L. Rogers, Kirsten L. Spalding, and Mary B. Roberts, "Safer Storage of Firearms at Home and Risk of Suicide: a Study of Protective Factors in a Nationally Representative Sample," *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 58, no. 10 (2004): 841–848.

#### 4. LISTEN: VOTERS ARE IN FAVOR

- A Oregon telephone poll, conducted by Northwest-based Patinkin Research Strategies from Aug. 20 through Sept. 5, reached 1,000 parents and public school teachers. The poll found **76 percent of parents and 79 percent of teachers think requiring safe gun storage would be effective to some degree at reducing gun violence in schools.**
  - A recent survey from APM Research Lab, Call To Mind and Guns & America found that **most Americans — including those who own guns and those who don't — support laws requiring gun owners to store their firearms with a lock in place. The survey found that nearly eight in 10 Americans support mandating that guns are stored with a lock in place.** The survey interviewed over 1,000 people, including participants from different ethnicities, political backgrounds and geographic regions. **A two-thirds majority of gun-owners supports mandated locked gun storage, including the 45% who strongly support such a mandate.**
    - The level of support differed among some groups. Separated by gender, 83% of women supported a gun storage mandate, compared with 74% of men.
    - Among political backgrounds, **nearly seven in 10 Republicans supported a locked gun mandate**, compared with **nearly eight in 10 Independents and nine in 10 Democrats.**
    - **Of participants living in metropolitan areas, 81% supported a safe storage law, compared with 68% living outside a metropolitan area.**
1. APM Survey, July 16-21, 2019. N = 1,009 U.S. adults age 18 or older; overall margin of error is +/-3.4 percentage poin