



To: Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
From: State Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D., House District 33
Date: March 4, 2021
Subject: HB 2543

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Nobel and Power, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Maxine Dexter, M.D., State Representative for House District 33. I am grateful for this opportunity today to request your full support for House Bill 2543, a bill to end the Charleston Loophole.

I am the mother to two teenagers who have grown up in the era of active shooter drills, school lockdowns and peers making threats of violence on social media. I know the terror of looking at your phone and seeing an alert that your child is in lock down while at school and texting them through it, desperate to be sure they keep answering.

When individuals seek to purchase a firearm, a background check is done to ensure their eligibility to be in possession of a firearm. Under current law, if that background check takes more than three days to complete, the firearm can be transferred to the purchaser regardless of whether or not they are actually eligible to purchase a firearm. This is the Charleston Loophole.

Background checks are the most important tool we have to decrease gun violence. We must allow law enforcement time to complete their work, to be sure firearms do not get sold to prohibited purchasers.

HB 2543 does not create any new restrictions for gun ownership or transfer; it simply ensures the legal process and protections which are currently active by law cannot be circumvented. Things like a complicated record or technical challenges can lead to delays, and it is important the process is completed, even if it takes longer than 72 hours.

This is a bill with the potential to save lives. I urge the committee to join me in voting yes to send HB 2543 to the floor.

Sincerely,

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.

House District 33 (NW Portland and NE Washington County and indigenous lands of the Cowlitz, Clackamas and Grand Ronde)