

Chair Prusak, Vice-chairs Hayden and Salinas, and members of the committee,

My name is Maria Faria. I am a gun violence prevention advocate with Moms Demand Action, and I submit this testimony to urge the committee to **support HB 2510**, which would require gun owners to store their firearms securely when a firearm is not on their person.

Responsible gun owners know the risks of unsecured firearms, and keep their guns locked or stored in safes. However, 54% of gun owners do not lock their guns. 4.6 million children live in households with unlocked guns.^{1,2}

In addition, an estimated 200,000 to 500,000 guns are stolen every year, and many are funneled to the underground market, where they typically end up in the hands of criminals.³ Gun owners who legally bought their guns are unintentionally feeding the black market by not securing their firearms to prevent theft.

A very close to home example happened this past summer. A few blocks from where I live, a young man returning from an afternoon spent shooting with friends found his car broken into. Three AR15s, four handguns, a shotgun and what he described as a lot of ammunition, were stolen from his car. A police report was filed, but the guns were not recovered - in spite of the assignment of an investigator. City police, I was told, rarely assign investigators to gun thefts because they happen too often, and guns are never found.

Negligence allowed those guns to be stolen. This is also the same negligence that allows people experiencing mental health crises to kill themselves or others. This is the same negligence that results in child and teen suicide.

A heartbreaking example of the consequences of an unsecured gun is the tragic loss of a friend's 10-year-old grandson, Micheal. Micheal found the gun his father had purchased to protect the family, and shot himself. His lifeless body was found by siblings, two younger than him. As my friend puts it, her son wanted to protect his family from danger, but he didn't know the danger that shattered his family would come from within. They now carry the grief of the loss of a child and live under a shadow of guilt.

A common misconception is that locking guns defeats the purpose of owning a gun for self-defense. The truth is that it only takes a matter of seconds to unlock a gun.⁴ My friend's son would quickly have access to his locked gun if needed. But it would have stopped her grandson's impulsive act.

I and others are here to remind you that these are not hypothetical scenarios. This is the reality we live with. We can do better if we face the problem responsibly and objectively. Moms Demand Action volunteers have advocated for this bill in the past, and we will continue to work tirelessly to help pass a secure storage bill in Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Maria Faria

1. Child and Teen Gun Safety <https://everytownresearch.org/issue/child-teen-safety>
2. Grossman DC, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional firearm injuries. *JAMA*. 2005;293(6):707–714
3. Secure Gun Storage <https://everytownresearch.org/solution/responsible-gun-storage/>
4. Hung E. 4 best bedside pistol gun safes for quick access. Pew Tactical. January 23, 2019. <https://bit.ly/2Rb2Dil>.