



March 10, 2021

Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Oregon, we express our support for House Bill 2510.

Gun violence is a public health crisis and must be addressed.

No "right" -- even those enshrined in our Constitution give total license to any and all behaviors. Free speech is guaranteed, but that does not exonerate hate speech, obscenity, fraud or incitement to imminent lawless action. The right to freely exercise one's religious rights is guaranteed in the First Amendment, but in certain circumstances, federal protection of those rights runs afoul of the First Amendment's additional prescription that the federal government cannot establish one religion over another.

The American Bar Association has published a Resolution highlighting the need for safe storage regulations. It points out,

*Safe storage laws are a constitutional means to protect the public from preventable suicides, tragic accidents, and crime, while respecting Americans' Second Amendment rights. All too often, unauthorized users gain access to guns that are left unsecured in homes or in vehicles and use those guns to harm themselves or others. In homes across the United States, gun owners and non-gun owners alike face the devastating impacts of family fire – a shooting involving an improperly stored or misused firearm in the home that results in injury or death.<sup>1</sup>*

Unfortunately, many parents believe that their children have never handled the firearms in their homes, but children's self-reports tell another story.<sup>2</sup>

Among gun-owning households with children, approximately two in ten of these owners store at least one gun in the least safe manner, i.e., loaded and unlocked.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Safe Storage*, Standing Committee on Gun Violence, American Bar Association, [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_interest/gun\\_violence/policy/20m107c/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/gun_violence/policy/20m107c/), 17 February 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Basley and Matthew Miller, *Parental Misperceptions about Children and Firearms*, Arch Pediatric Adolescent Medicine, May 2006, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16651499/>

<sup>3</sup> Azrael, et al, *Firearm Storage in Gun-Ownning Households with Children: Results of a 2015 National Survey*, J Urban Health, 2018, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29748766/>

Women are particularly at risk when firearms are unsecure and at the ready. It is also the case that women in particular bear the burden of increased gun ownership. Women killed by their partners are more likely to be committed with a firearm than by all other means combined, and the presence of a gun in domestic violence situations can increase the risk of homicide for women by as much as 500 percent.<sup>4</sup> This potential for violence has been on the rise during the COVID pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

As Stephen Hawking has told us, one of the basic rules of the universe is that nothing is perfect. Reasonable limitations are part of life's fabric. One of those limitations should be to require gun owners to keep their firearms secure.

We respectfully urge your support of House Bill 2510.

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<sup>4</sup> Kivisto, et al, *Firearm Ownership and Domestic Versus Nondomestic Homicide in the US*, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 1 September 2019, [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(19\)30197-7/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(19)30197-7/fulltext); Sarah Mervosh, *Homicides, but Not Other Killings, Study Finds*, New York Times, 212 July 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/22/us/gun-ownership-violence-statistics.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Heidi Przybyla, *Gun Violence Grows During Coronavirus Pandemic Group's Data Shows*, Meet the Press Blog, 10 March 2021, [http://analysis-data-driving-political-discussion-n988541/ncrd1223551 -blogHeader](http://analysis-data-driving-political-discussion-n988541/ncrd1223551-blogHeader).