



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Chair Prusak, Vice-Chair Hayden, Vice-Chair Salinas, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2510.

Before joining the legislature, I served 25 years in the Oregon Army National Guard and later switched over to the Air National Guard, where I still serve today. I believe in this bill and easily support it because it adopts the same approach to safe gun storage observed in the military.

When members of the military are not serving in a combat area, we must store them unloaded and in a locked storage area. General Stanley McChrystal characterized these good safety measures when he wrote, "Those of us who served in the military were trained in the effective and safe use of firearms. We were taught about the responsibility that comes with carrying a gun. As combat infantrymen and special operators, we received thousands of hours of firearms training".

These safety measures are a basic responsibility that should be incumbent on every gun owner when a weapon is not under their immediate control. A responsible gun owner appreciates that we have a duty to ensure it does not end up in the hands of an unauthorized user because that poses a danger to that person and others around them.

Safe gun storage is a critical step to reducing the epidemic of gun suicides among those who have served in our country. More than 60% of US military suicides occur at home and involve a firearm and nearly all military firearm suicides involve a personally owned firearm. This is why the Veterans Administration has made safe gun storage a critical priority when it comes to serving our veterans.

This bill is also important to helping Oregon civilians. The CDC found that 23,941 suicides involve a firearm which is more than half of all suicides in the United States. Specifically, in my district, from 1995 to 2018 there were 877 firearm suicides in Lane County and 232 in Linn County. In that same time period there were 13 accidental firearm deaths in Lane County and 10 in Linn County.

Colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I hope you will join me in supporting this important policy to reduce gun violence in Oregon. I appreciate the work that many of you have put into this issue.

Sincerely,

Marty Wilde, State Representative House District 11

