

HB 2510 Safe Storage 03.11.2021 Ceasefire Oregon testimony in support

The Ceasefire Oregon Board of Directors strongly supports safe storage for firearms. The one common denominator in every firearm injury or death is access to a loaded firearm. The most important action parents, caregivers, and gun owners can do to protect children is to reduce children's access to firearms and safely store all guns.

Simply hiding a gun doesn't stop a curious child or teen. In 2015 alone, 19 toddlers were killed because they found a loaded inadequately stored gun and used it to kill themselves and/or someone else. Storing firearms unloaded in a safe or with a locking device, with ammunition stored in a separate, secure safe, is essential. For information about safe storage solutions, visit www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/violence-injury-prevention/violence-prevention/gun-violence/LOCK-IT-UP.aspx.

In addition to keeping young members of your family safe, secure storage prevents crimes from being committed with your gun. A U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics report found that 1.4 million firearms were stolen across the country from 2005 through 2010. It also found that the vast majority – at least 80 percent – were never recovered.¹

Safe storage also helps prevent depressed young people from dying by suicide. Contrary to popular myth, suicide is preventable and is often an impetuous act, especially for teens. Removing a highly effective method of death – a gun – from the equation reduces the chances of teens in your home ending their own lives. States requiring gun locks see a 68% lower suicide rate compared with states without laws requiring gun locks.^{2,3}

Lastly, safe storage of your firearms will help keep our schools and communities safe. The teenaged Reynolds High School shooter in Troutdale, OR, used his brother's and father's guns. The Marysville Pilchuck High School shooter in Washington State used his father's gun. Surely their families never imagined their easily accessed firearms would lead to such devastating outcomes.

In Multnomah County, safe firearm storage isn't just a good idea — it's the law. Under Multnomah County Ordinance 15.066, "Endangering a Child by Allowing Access to a Firearm," a person commits the offense of endangering a child if a person fails to prevent access to a loaded or unloaded firearm by a minor without the permission of the person, a parent, or guardian, when the person knew or reasonably should have known that a minor could gain access to the firearm.⁴

In light of these concerns, Ceasefire Oregon calls on the Oregon legislature to pass a strong, effective law that will encourage gun owners to secure their firearms at all times. Even though the Board believes HB 2510 would be stronger with three amendments, the Ceasefire Oregon Board supports HB 2510 with or without these amendments.

We will continue to work toward improving the safe storage of firearms now and in the future. We bring these amendments to the attention of legislators and the public because they are important next steps:

An **anti-trafficking** amendment gives law enforcement a tool to prevent gun traffickers from continuing to buy and sell firearms illegally.⁵

- An anti-trafficking amendment would remove firearms for the first violation of safe storage provisions if the firearm were used in the commission of a felony. A gun owner would forfeit all firearms and lose the right to own/possess firearms for subsequent violations.
- Gun owners are more likely to secure their firearms in states where a felony penalty can result if an unsecured firearm is used to commit a crime. In the absence of a felony penalty, we believe gun owners might be more likely to secure their firearms if the gun owner risks forfeiture of the firearm or, if the gun owner commits a second offense, the loss of the right to purchase or possess firearms.
- The amendment provides an affirmative defense if a straw purchaser was forced to make the purchases because of domestic abuse.
- This proposed amendment would not change Section 3(3) of HB 2510 that holds the gun owner strictly liable.

A **serial number** amendment encourages people to retain the serial numbers of their firearms but does not punish those who cannot locate the serial numbers due to loss of documents that was beyond the gun owner's control. Lost and stolen reporting laws help reduce gun trafficking by requiring individuals to report loss or theft to law enforcement shortly after discovering it.⁵

- Providing the serial numbers of lost or stolen guns gives law enforcement crucial information to identify the firearms.
- The gun owner is allowed to document why the serial number was not available. (Ceasefire Oregon recognizes that many Oregonians lost documents when their homes were destroyed during wildfires.)

The **Oregon State Police (OSP) report** amendment would require the Oregon State Police to provide three annual reports:

- theft or loss of privately held firearms in Oregon
- method of storage of firearms used in all unintentional shootings
- shootings involving minors

More information:

www.ceasefireoregon.org/legislation with details at
www.ceasefireoregon.org/bills/yuille-forsyth-storage-act.

1. Salter, Jim (August 25, 2015) Police Tackling New Gun Trend Nationwide
www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/aug/25/guns-stolen-from-vehicles-increasingly-used-in-vio
2. Bakalar, Nicholas (August 19, 2015) Gun Laws Associated with Lower Suicide Rates
<https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/08/19/gun-laws-associated-with-lower-suicide-rates/>

3. Michael D. Anestis, PhD, and Joye C. Anestis PhD (April 29, 2015) Suicide Rates and State Laws Regulating Access and Exposure to Handguns
<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302753>
4. Multnomah County Ordinance 15.066, "Endangering a Child by Allowing Access to a Firearm"
5. giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/owner-responsibilities/reporting-lost-stolen-guns