

Testimony of Henry Wessinger  
To House Committee On Health Care  
On HB 2510  
March 11, 2021

Chair Prusak and Members of the Committee:

My name is Henry Wessinger, I am a fifth-generation Oregonian, I live in Multnomah County, and I testify today in support of House Bill 2510. Professionally, I am President of State of Safety Action, a non-partisan organization working to reduce gun violence and promote gun safety for all Oregonians.

State of Safety Action was actively involved in drafting HB 2510, and believes its passage will measurably reduce gun violence in our state, especially accidental firearm discharges by children, child and teenage firearm suicide, and student school shootings. The expert witnesses who testified before this committee on Tuesday provided data on the first and second of these, so I would like to provide data on the third.

Two separate studies of school shootings by the U.S. Secret Service showed more than 2/3rds of the weapons used came from the home of the attacker or the home of a relative of the attacker. Every time I hear of a school shooting in Oregon, I hold my breath and say a prayer for my three nieces who are public school teachers in Portland, Salem, and Bend, given that teachers are often victims in school shootings. Passing HB 2510 to reduce the potential for school shootings in Oregon should cause every member of the Committee to support this bill.

While State of Safety Action has been working hard for the passage of HB 2510, our sister organization, State of Safety, has begun planning what should be done after the passage of HB 2510 to ensure maximum compliance with the new law. From our previous state-wide polling of Oregon gunowners, a majority report they already practice safe storage; so HB 2510 will not change what they do.

Targeting information to reach new gun owners on the requirements of HB 2510, along with encouraging the adoption of safe storage practices by longer-standing gun owners, will require a thoughtful and coordinated effort in which State of Safety is prepared to participate.

We all deserve to be free from gun violence. I urge the Committee to take positive action on HB 2510.