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April 21, 2021

To: House Committee On Rules
Re: Testimony in Support of SB 554-20A's Safe Storage Provisions

Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee:

My name is Henry Wessinger, and I write today in strong support of Senate Bill 554-20A. I am a resident of Multnomah County, a fifth-generation Oregonian, a father of three sons, a grandfather to my son's two-year old daughter, and an uncle to three nieces who are public school teachers in Portland, Salem, and Bend. 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 the drafting of the safe storage policies in HB 2510 that are now contained in SB 554-20A. We believe SB 554-20A 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 in support of the same safe storage policies in hearings earlier this year before the House Committee on Health Care provided compelling data on the first and second of these, so I would like to provide data on the third.

Two separate studies of school shooting by the U.S. Secret Service showed more than two-thirds of the weapons used in school shootings came from the home of the attacker or the home of a relative of the attacker. The interlude in school shootings due to COVID-19 is drawing to an end with students beginning to return to their schools. Given my nieces are statistically likely to be victims if their schools experience a shooting incident, passage of SB 554-20A is also a personal priority.

While State of Safety Action is now working hard for the passage of SB 554-20A, our sister organization, State of Safety, has begun planning what can be done after the passage of the safe storage and reporting provisions 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 SB 554-20A will not change what they do.

**We can be free
from gun violence**



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Targeting information to reach new gun owners on the requirements of SB 554-20A, 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 SB 554-20A

Respectfully,
Henry Wessinger
President, State of Safety Action

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