



Oregon Pediatric Society

A Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Incorporated in Oregon

DATE: April 22, 2021

TO: Chair Smith Warner and members of the House Committee on Rules

FROM: Shaili Rajput, MD, MPH, FAAP
Oregon Pediatric Society Member

SUBJECT: Support for SB 554-A

The Oregon Pediatric Society (OPS) is the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our membership is committed to improving and protecting the health and well-being of all children in Oregon, as well as those who care for them. For the record, my name is Shaili Rajput. I am a pediatrician advocate practicing in Portland, Oregon. OPS strongly endorsed HB 2510, which would save children's lives and injury from accidental or intentional gun use, and supports SB 554 as amended.

As a pediatrician and mother to two young boys, I see the natural curiosity and exploratory behavior that signals normal, healthy development in growing children. It is not difficult for me to imagine—with terror—the tiny but mighty hands of my patients or of my boys, curiously examining an unlocked and loaded firearm, and accidentally doing irrevocable harm to their bodies. It is not difficult for me to imagine because I have cared for a critically injured young boy who accidentally shot himself in this way. He did not survive.

My current practice is teeming with depressed and anxious adolescents seriously contemplating suicide. An important aspect of counseling my patients ensures that access to firearms is mitigated through safe storage because we know that suicide attempts are more fatal when involving firearms. This is a fact. By voting yes on SB 554, we have the opportunity to protect our vulnerable teenagers.

This bill does not seek to strip away constitutional rights of firearm owners. It seeks to give my and your children the right to safety. As a member of OPS, I strongly urge members of this committee and of the Oregon legislature to vote yes on SB 554A.