

My name is Marina Seidl and I am a high schooler in Portland, Oregon. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify today.

The safety of our communities should ALWAYS be our first priority.

I strongly support SB 554. This bill will help keep guns out of schools and off college campuses in addition to empowering local officials to make the public safety decisions that are right for their communities. Oregon has taken many steps in recent years to protect our states families and children by passing stricter gun laws to maintain public safety and the next step for lawmakers is to pass this bill. Currently, Oregon law forces schools, colleges, and local government buildings to allow guns and not only is this dangerous to the innocent citizens in these buildings, but it also harms student and local officials' relationships. Research shows that policies that force colleges to allow guns on campuses are likely to lead to more shootings, homicides, and suicides. In addition to this, these policies do not prevent mass shootings—traumatic and preventable murders— from happening on campus. Research also strongly supports the idea that if guns are carried into schools, children are more likely to access those guns. This is unacceptable—lawmakers need to prioritize passing bill SB 554 to keep guns out of schools and to protect students. It is essential that local officials have the tools they need to protect public safety. SB 554 will support them with the instruments they need to protect buildings essential to the functioning of government without the use of firearms. As a student of an Oregon school and as a citizen of the United States where the safety of others should be a priority, I urge you to vote YES on bill SB 554.