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On Behalf Of:
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Measure: SB551

As a public educator, having earned a master's degree and Ph.D. in related academic areas, (special educator (K-12), counselor (K-12) and principal (alternative school 7-12)) for over 40 years, and a parent, my main concern has been to support the social, emotional and academic growth of probably thousands of children in several school districts. With this in mind, I strongly believe in the important role of schools, a community meeting place, to spread public safety information related to child safety.

The focus of schools is to provide a safe place for children to learn. School districts are proactive for children's health and safety by requiring vaccines, having rules regarding safe behaviors by students, having fire drills and lock down drills.

Receiving information from a child's school is a part of the culture of having children in school. Schools send home informational materials through school and district websites, principal newsletters, teacher communications, etc.

Children being killed and injured by guns is a daily headline. Parents are anxious about sending their children to school not knowing if they will be safe from a person with a gun. The Secret Service has found that three fourths of school shooters acquired their guns from the home of their parent or of a close relative. People may have their guns, but they need to be locked in a recognized secure manner.

Information about other safety precautions related to children is disseminated freely. Such as kids need to be seated securely in cars, be vaccinated, medicines are to be kept in a secure place, etc.. Sharing information about how to securely lock fire arms could be the safety information that prevents the deaths and severe injuries of children and adults in schools and at home. We have stopped measles, mumps, diphtheria, etc. from spreading, through communication.

In another vein, we worry about the mental health of children. They are confronted with lock downs and scary talk about "if there is an intruder" or hearing about another school shooting. Our schools have locks on them, children are surrounded by warning signs the need to be alert to danger, Children are scared, and it interferes with learning. If the guns in homes and vehicles were secured, there would be less access to guns that could disrupt a child's learning space and home. The danger from guns would be lessened.

Also, children are curious. Even though they are told not to touch a gun if they see one, or they know there is one in the house, they will want to explore this "forbidden" object. If the gun is not securely locked, with ammunition stored elsewhere in a locked manner, the danger is exponential.

If schools were mandated to share secure gun storage information, the impact could be monumental. People who don't have guns, would learn to ask if there are secured

guns in the homes where their children visit, just as they ask about other safety concerns. Those who have guns, may need to be reminded about the relationship of unsecured guns and curious children.

There are about 41,900 children in Oregon's public schools. Every family needs to be fortified with proactive information on secure gun storage. School information reaches the homes of children from all racial, religious, and economic backgrounds. We need to help caregivers keep their children safer and healthier by securely locking their guns, and/or those of where their children visit!

This is vital.

Thank you for your true care for children.