

Submitter: Jessica Rutherford  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: HB2005

March 19, 2023  
Oregon Legislation  
Salem, Oregon

To Whom It May Concern:

The number one priority at the top of the long list of parental responsibilities is to keep our children safe. Yet, every day we send our children off to school and every day a lingering, dark presence haunts parents, of imagery of the televised aftermath of gun violence at schools. The exact gun violence that is an outrageously accepted fabric of our individualistic society. It is psychologically devastating to send your children into a potential battlefield every single day; rolling the dice on their lives with only a hope that they survive the odds—the probabilities that are growing against their favor.

The fact that some Americans' hobbies, personal interests, and their gun and freedom philosophies are more important than my child's (and their own children's) lives is horrific. The arguments in favor of gun freedom and personal choice are even more horrendous than the countless deaths as outcomes of gun violence. The complacency is inconceivable. Each time a mass murder unfolds, the response is always followed by an incredulous shock; how could this occur in my community (gasp!) even after watching and knowing of countless examples in other communities. The disconnect that the "they," might someday be you. The focus on individual rights is more important than the collective "we" and will only continue to destroy our livelihood and our sense of freedom and peace.

The lack of action from our politicians to interject and stop this force of powerful greed, is literally killing our country and children. The inaction is killing people going to church. Inaction is killing people grocery shopping who are leaving their homes with the intent to feed their families and instead end up dead. Parade goers. Our fourth graders. Our teenagers. Our college students. Kindergarteners. I hope that you will change this current trajectory that we have been moving forward with for decades and counter years of this murderous INACTION. When you make your decision on these bills, I ask you to picture YOUR child's lifeless body on the ground and only being able to identify them by their shoes. Gruesome? Absolutely—and a reality for an Uvalde parent. As a mother, I cannot avoid that imagery and we cannot deny the certainty that this will continue to happen. Please. We beg you. Change the course of our history and make it harder for gun violence to be carried out in Oregon. Be a leader of our nation, so that when Oregon statistics of gun violence are lower than most states the rest of the country can choose to take our lead—your lead, in making an actual change.

We are done praying that the violence stops. We are praying that YOU think of the “we” when voting on these bills rather than the interests, money, gun-hobbies, gun-lobbyists, and the self-importance that make up the foundation of gun culture.

Concerned,

Jessica Rutherford

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