

Submitter: Bethany Wofford  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: HB2007

Dear Chair Kropf and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to you today in support of HB 2007 as a parent, as a social worker who has worked in many public spaces, and a volunteer with Moms Demand Action, a grassroots movement fighting for gun safety. I live in a neighborhood in NE Portland that has had so many shootings in broad daylight that I am afraid to let my ten year old daughter walk to her friends' houses. I refuse to accept that her future and her freedom should be curtailed by our society's failure to enact common sense gun violence prevention laws. I live in a home where firearms are securely stored, unloaded, in a locked safe. Even though I grew up in Texas, and I know many responsible gun owners and hunters, I have also seen the finality of gun violence firsthand. My cousin was taken by gun homicide. He was at a party, and someone who was intoxicated and angry went into their bedroom and grabbed a gun and attempted to shoot everyone at the party. My cousin stopped him, but lost his life. I believe that we can put the value of human life and our right to walk through life without constantly wondering if yet another mass shooting is about to happen, above the complexity of implementing laws that will reduce gun violence.

My first job out of college was working with families impacted by abuse and domestic violence, and I have also worked in a county human services building. These spaces are vulnerable to conflicts that can escalate quickly. I worked in the Texas Capitol, where it is commonplace for both members of the Legislature and of the public to roam the halls openly displaying their weapons. My colleagues and I felt unsafe and at risk from volatile individuals. I've accompanied families to hearings in court, a place where some people are having the worst day of their lives. These are all examples of public spaces where the presence of guns are a threat to public safety.

When I entered the field of social work 25 years ago it was before mass shootings had become as disturbingly frequent as they are now, and I saw gun violence as a distant threat. I can't even imagine what it must be like for young people today who are undergoing multiple lockdown drills every year in school. If we want people to work in public service, participate in civic life and provide services to people, we must also provide spaces that are free from the threat of gun violence. Finally, as the parent of a young child, I wish to be able to enjoy a day in a park where I can relax knowing that guns and firearms are not allowed.

I also support other gun violence prevention legislation to raise the minimum age for purchasing semi-automatic assault rifles to 21, and prohibiting ghost guns. I believe

these are reasonable common sense actions that will move us in the right direction and I ask for your support. I want nothing more than for my child to grow up in a culture that acknowledges the inherent dangers of guns and takes responsibility for addressing the violence we currently face every day.