

Submitter: Brandy Steelhammer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB2006

Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

As a mom, social worker, and life-long Oregonian who has lost 5 loved ones to gun violence (all in Oregon), I am writing to urge your support of HB 2006, which raises the age to purchase and possess semiautomatic rifles to 21. Through my education in psychology, social work, and motherhood, as well as my experience working with children/teens who have endured trauma, I understand how impulsive teenagers can be. The fact is, the human brain does not fully develop until the mid to late 20s and the prefrontal cortex is one of the last parts of our brain to mature (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-7-things-to-know>. The prefrontal cortex regulates our emotions, thoughts and actions. It helps us make wise, thoughtful decisions through planning, and keeps us from acting impulsively (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2907136>). Given this fact as well as the research that shows 18-20 year-olds commit gun homicides at a rate nearly 3x that of adults age 21 and over (everytownresearch.org), it is common sense for Oregon to pass HB 2006. Guns are the leading cause of death for American children and teens (https://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/org/od/directors_corner/prev_updates/gun-violence-July2022). Laws like 2006 can help decrease the risk of firearm homicide, suicide, and unintentional shootings.

Growing up in Oregon, I understand the rich tradition of hunting that families, including mine, enjoy. The tradition has been passed onto my sons. Some of their best memories are from hunting trips. I appreciate the delicate balance of allowing the tradition of hunting to continue while gun violence soars in the US. Responsible gun owners like my family support gun safety laws like HB 2006. It's a common sense law that will protect us all.

Respectfully submitted,
Brandy Steelhammer, LCSW