

Support - HB2006

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Anderson and Wallan and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Elyse Foster. I am a resident of Portland. As a mother, grandmother, physician and gun safety advocate, I urge your support of HR 2006 to raise the legal age for purchase of assault type weapons from 18 to 21 years. With the passage of this bill and its eventual enactment into law, Oregon would join 22 other states that already have similar laws.

This legislation makes sense. Research has shown that individuals aged 18 - 20 are more than three times as likely to commit gun homicides than those 21 and older. Recent examples of mass shootings drive this point home. The shooter in Uvalde was able to purchase an assault weapon days after his 18th birthday. The tragic Bend Safeway shooting was committed by a 20 year old. The Buffalo Tops Market massacre was committed by an 18 year old. While "raising the age" won't prevent all mass shootings, any legislation that takes a step towards reducing deaths due to gun violence is an important step in the right direction.

Brain development is incomplete in young adults making them vulnerable to risky behavior including suicide and gun violence. Research has shown that the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for impulse control, is not completely developed until age 26. There is strong data showing that raising the minimum age for purchase of a handgun prevents gun-related suicides. Prohibiting the purchase of semi-automatic rifles for these individuals could prevent many homicides including mass shootings.

HB 2006 is one of the highest priorities for Oregon's Chapter of Moms Demand Action. Please support this measure as well as HB 2005, prohibiting ghost guns and other untraceable firearms, as well as HB 2007, further enhancing the ability of local governments to limit firearms in sensitive areas. We have great hopes for the 2023 legislative session, which could prove to have the most substantial impact on reducing gun violence in Oregon in recent years.

Thank you for permitting me to submit this written testimony.

Sincerely,

Elyse Foster, MD