



To: Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

From: Katie Iossi, MD, MPH, Joel R. Burnett, MD, and Jenny Silberger, MD on Behalf of the Oregon Chapter of American College of Physicians

Date: March 22, 2023

Re: In Support of HB 2005

The Oregon Chapter of American College of Physicians represents more than 1,600 medical students, residents/fellow-in-trainings, and practicing internal medicine physicians in Oregon. Internal medicine physicians are specialists in the care of medical patients both in the office and the hospital and apply their expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum of health to complex illness. On behalf of our organization, we write in **strong support of HB 2005**.

Firearm-related injury and death are a public health crisis that continues to worsen in Oregon. According to the CDC, 592 Oregonians died from firearm-related injuries in 2020 and, in 2021, 670 deaths by firearm were reported by the Oregon Health Authority.^{1,2} This is a significant increase in deaths and is equivalent to a mass shooting every few days. Additionally, in 2021 the number of visits to Oregon Emergency Rooms for firearm injury reached 873, a 63.5% increase from 2018.³

The American College of Physicians – the parent organization of the Oregon Chapter of American College of Physicians – routinely and rigorously evaluates evidence for treatment and prevention of illness and disease in order to guide front-line physicians. Given the immense impact that firearm injury and death have on our patients and communities, the American College of Physicians does the same type of evidence review on firearm injuries. The most recent comprehensive review is located in the 2018 paper, [Reducing Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in the U.S.](#) ACP supports universal criminal background checks for all firearm purchases in order to ensure that individuals who are legally prohibited from owning firearms are legally prevented from obtaining them.⁴ These individuals include felons, those committed involuntarily for mental health disorders, and those who have committed violence in the past and are determined to be at high risk of harming themselves or others.

Undetectable firearms, also known as ghost guns, can be obtained by individuals legally prohibited from possessing firearms. This undermines the regulatory safe-guards against guns falling into the hands of high risk individuals. Further, undetectable firearms often lack serial numbers and cannot be traced by law enforcement.⁵ The threat to public safety is not

theoretical. New evidence indicates that ghost guns are much more likely to be recovered in violent crimes relative to guns produced by licensed manufacturers.⁶

Addressing the threat to public safety that undetectable firearms pose to Oregon is an urgent priority for the Oregon Chapter of the American College of physicians. HB 2005 aims to close loopholes that allow individuals to obtain, sell, or transfer undetectable firearms. Following the stance of our parent organization, The American College of Physicians, we support this bill and other measures that reduce the toll of gun injury and death in our state.⁵

Data shows that large majorities of Americans across the political spectrum support policies designed to prevent high risk individuals from having firearms.⁷ Safety from injury and violence is a bipartisan issue, and an area of common ground for gun-owners and non-gun-owners alike. With this in mind HB 2005 should not be framed as a bill about restricting the rights of law-abiding firearm owners. Rather, it is about preventing those who are at highest risk of causing injury and death to themselves and others from obtaining them through loopholes.

Adopting HB 2005 is an evidence-based approach to reducing firearm injury, respects the rights of law-abiding gun owners, and is likely to increase public safety. As noted in the American College of Physicians' 2018 paper, [Reducing Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in the U.S.](#), "changing laws that surround the purchase and use of firearms, in ways that are fully consistent with the second amendment" is something that must be done in order to end this public health epidemic.⁴

In summary, HB 2005 will help prevent individuals who are legally prohibited from purchasing and owning firearms from doing so. In the interest of public health and the safety of our communities, we strongly urge you to vote yes on HB 2005. Thank you for your consideration, and please don't hesitate to contact us for additional information or support.

Sincerely,

Katie Iossi, MD, MPH, FACP, Member, Health & Public Policy Committee of the Oregon Chapter of American College of Physicians

Joel Burnett, MD, Chair, Health & Public Policy Committee of the Oregon Chapter of American College of Physicians

Jenny Silberger, MD, FACP, Governor of the Oregon Chapter of American College of Physicians

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). Firearm Mortality by State. Accessed 3/19/2023 at https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm_mortality/firearm.htm

² Oregon Health Authority (2021). Injury deaths and rates, by manner, sex and age. Accessed 3/19/2023 <https://visual->

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³ Firearm Injury Emergency Department Visits in Oregon 2018-2021: An Oregon FASTER Project Data Report. Accessed 3/19/2023 at <https://www.ohsu.edu/sites/default/files/2022-10/FASTER%20Data%20Report%20Aug.%202022%20FINAL.pdf>

⁴ Butkus R, Doherty R, Bornstein SS; Health and Public Policy Committee of the American College of Physicians; Carney JK, Cooney T, Engel L, Gantzer HE, Henry TL, Lenchus JD, McCandless BM, Quinton J, Southworth M, Valdrighi A, Wallace MA. Reducing Firearm Injuries and Deaths in the United States: A Position Paper From the American College of Physicians. *Ann Intern Med.* 2018 Nov 20;169(10):704-707. doi: 10.7326/M18-1530. Epub 2018 Oct 30. PMID: 30383132.

⁵ Abraham G. 2021. Letter on Definition of “Frame or Receiver and Identification of Firearms Proposed Rule” to Andrew Lange, Office of Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Accessed 3/19/2023 at https://assets.acponline.org/acp_policy/letters/acp_comments_on_atf_proposed_rule_on_ghost_guns_august_2021.pdf

⁶ Braga AA, Barao LM, Wintemute GJ, Valle S, Valente J. Privately manufactured firearms, newly purchased firearms, and the rise of urban gun violence. *Prev Med.* 2022 Dec;165(Pt A):107231. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2022.107231. Epub 2022 Sep 7. PMID: 36087626.

⁷ Barry CL, McGinty EE, Vernick JS, Webster DW. 2013. After Newtown—public opinion on gun policy and mental illness. *N. Engl. J. Med.* 368:1077–81