



March 27, 2023

Senator Prozanski,

We are writing to you today as caucus chairs within the Democratic Party of Oregon to address concerns we have with the implementation of Measure 114. We understand that there are myriad voices, all with a stake in the outcome of this process, and many wishing to see the measure relegated to the trash. We, however, believe that this is a vital moment where we can lean in to imagine together what is possible versus tweaking the status quo.

Given your schedule, you're likely not aware of our work around this issue, but for more than a year, we have worked in a coalition between our caucuses and others who are deeply committed to saving lives. Included were several House members and one of them filed a bill that was modeled after a solution we proposed. Many who worked with us have been personally touched by the tragedy of gun violence, and, together, we intend to save the lives of as many of our fellow Oregonians as possible, regardless of their political ideology. This is about more than left and right. It is about what we can do to implement the will of the people while balancing the right to bear arms and public safety. We affirm that we can do both.

Because we believe in re-imagining what is possible, the proposal we settled on was to move the permit to purchase system to the state DMV (though we'd like to add to that the OSP offices as well), to make it fully accessible and fair, while reducing direct interactions with and financial/staff burden on police. The DMV already issues permits (licenses) statewide, and would reduce the contact between individuals and police. This move would save the State at least \$60M in the first year alone and alleviate the burden on small county sheriff's offices, many of whom have said they either cannot or will not be able to process these kinds of permits. We have attached the one-page description of this bill for your review.

We believe that a move of this kind is fair, just, and Constitutionally sound. Allowing applicants to file paperwork electronically and removing the burden of permitting from local and county departments means that rural, LGBTQIA+, and BIPOC applicants will be safer when accessing their right to keep and bear arms. This proposal will also make it easier for everyday Oregonians to maintain compliance. If someone moves from Multnomah County to Douglas County, they won't need to

notify the DMV and both county sheriffs' offices. Instead, they could notify the DMV alone (and update their voter registration at the same time!) and maintain a valid permit the whole time. Finally, this proposal adds safe storage and suicide prevention to the required training, giving hundreds of thousands of Oregonians like us the education to notice the "red flags" of suicidal ideation in themselves and others. Additionally, we believe these changes represent major improvements to the original measure, improves resilience against Court challenges, and could be a model for other states to follow.

We are sure you understand that this is an issue of critical urgency. It cannot wait for another session or time. Acting now is likely to prevent the measure from being ultimately stricken by the courts, with the benefit to Oregonians being both increased safety AND the recognition that their rights to firearms and self defense are valuable and protected in Oregon. Of course, as caucus chairs, we come together to serve and engage in the shared struggle of becoming a more perfect union. We want to see you incorporate these ideas into your proposed solution, and would be happy to discuss the matter further or provide any assistance you may need.

With gratitude and hope,

Rosa Colquitt, PhD

Chair, Democratic Party of Oregon

Chair, Black Caucus

Member, Gun Owners Caucus

Kim Schmith

Chair, Rural Caucus

Member, Gun Owners Caucus

Michael Smith

Chair, Gun Owners Caucus

The data shows that, on average, **80% of Oregon firearm deaths are suicides.** In Oregon, suicide is:

- the 2nd leading cause of death among people under 45,
- the 5th leading cause of death for 45-54 year olds, and
- the 9th leading cause of death overall.

In Oregon and around the nation, suicidality and gun violence are intimately linked. Reducing suicides will reduce overall gun violence.

Firearms are used 55% of the time as a means for suicide, and this number goes up to 67% for Oregon veterans. **In addition, Oregon's suicide rate is 149% of the national average. For Oregon veterans, the crisis is similarly bleak.**

Firearms can be a controversial subject, but the one thing that Public Health, Behavioral Health, and Suicide Prevention experts all agree on is that time and distance between a person at risk for suicide

and a firearm saves lives. The best way to create time and distance is to temporarily store firearms outside of the home.

HB3513 is **evidenced-based and will save lives** by providing the following:

- Authorizing firearm hold agreements, **providing clarity** on how they should be done and **eliminating gray area in the law** regarding criminality,
- Providing immunity from liability for person who takes possession of firearm pursuant to firearm hold agreement except in actions arising from unlawful conduct and negligence,
- Directing the Oregon Health Authority to establish a grant program to **fund the purchase of storage lockers** to make it easier for FFLs to offer firearm hold agreements and appropriates money to authority to fund grants,
- Requiring that *future* CHL applicants be **trained on the use of firearm hold agreements** for firearm suicide prevention, and
- Providing that temporary transfers of secured firearms pursuant to firearm hold agreements are exempt from private transfer criminal background check requirement.

Every day is the right day to save a life.



HB 3513



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