

Submitter: Hilary Uhlig
On Behalf Of: Moms Demand Action
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Chair Steiner, Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hilary Uhlig, I'm a resident of Hillsboro, and the Oregon Chapter Leader for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

Last year, the Oregon Legislature designated 15 million dollars to support Community Based Violence Intervention programs which apply a localized approach to gun violence prevention. These funds were made available through use of the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and are being administered by the Oregon Department of Justice.

I'm here to urge you to renew the \$15 million dollars for community violence intervention programs in Oregon to ensure these programs can continue their important work without interruption.

Gun homicides and assaults occur at high rates within cities, and have a disproportionate impact in historically underfunded neighborhoods. Violence intervention programs provide evidence-based and community-informed, comprehensive support to individuals who are at greatest risk of gunshot victimization. These programs are shown to reduce gunshot injuries and deaths in the neighborhoods most impacted by gun violence. But community violence intervention groups have faced unprecedented challenges, and one of the most immediate things that policymakers can do is ensure they have the resources they need to continue their life-saving work.

While we hear much about the rise of city gun violence in Portland and surrounding cities, gun suicides in Oregon are higher than the national average, especially in rural areas. There are only 11 Congressional districts nationwide with more than 100 gun suicides per year - and 2 of them are in Oregon. In Eastern and Southern Oregon, where gun suicides are extraordinarily high, community-based organizations provide particularly vulnerable groups like youth and veterans with accessible mental health and crisis services.

The 15 million dollar budget allocation can be used to help stem the tide of gun violence in all its forms, whether its city gun violence, gun suicide, or domestic violence, and can also be used to address the upstream causes of violence in our state.

I urge you to include this allocation in the upcoming budget.