

Submitter: J Schuster
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1503

I strongly oppose the task force proposed by SB 1503. Gun Violence and Suicide Prevention are inappropriate topics to expect any useful research results from in the context of public health. The data on these topics is already compiled and readily available, additional research at best is a dubious use of public money and bureaucratic effort. At worst, it is potentially a means to pursue a desired political conclusion based on "research", which is inappropriate and would call into question the integrity of OHA and other participating groups.

Gun Violence and Suicide Prevention are grouped by this proposal, but should be treated as separate topics. While use of a firearm is part of approximately half of all suicides (roughly, depending on locale and demographic)- it a completely different context of firearm procurement, handling, use, and outcome than the broader subject of "gun violence". Gun Violence is a criminal issue and should also NOT be conflated with suicide. If suicide is (as is should be) divorced from gun violence statistics, then gun violence is statistically reduced to an issue that would not constitute among the greatest public health concerns. Even then, as mentioned, it should be handled as a criminal matter and NOT A public health matter. Oregon has existing laws regulating the sale and use of firearms, as well as violent crimes. Rather than focusing on a blind research effort, perhaps an effort to potentially politicize existing known data, the efforts should be put towards addressing the labor shortage facing our law enforcement entities and on effective use of our current legal tools to reduce gun violence.

As the stewards of our public resources I urge you to stand in opposition to this low payoff research initiative and focus on the more obvious issues facing the state, many of which have much more obvious and direct actions that can be taken than the foundation of this proposed task force. Thank you for your public service and for taking the time to review my testimony.