

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today in support of SB 1503, the Task Force bill on gun violence prevention and firearm suicide prevention.

I am a parent, community member of the South Tabor neighborhood, and a rationale human being.

Figuring out logical and practical measures to prevent unnecessary death and injuries from firearms should be a key priority of every single law maker in this country. As someone who grew up in the 80s or 90s, it still stuns me that my kindergartener has had to learn safety lockdown drills to prepare for the possibility of a school shooter. My neighborhood - a quiet residential medium income cherished community - has been the venue for several gun-related deaths over the last few years. It's deeply unsettling, truly terrifying, and incredibly frustrating how little progress has been made on this issue because of the sentimental attachment people have to their firearms. Living in a society means accepting common sense regulations to protect the lives of the community that we live in - weapons intended to kill are clearly an essential subject for such regulations.

Every year, we lose close to 600 Oregonians to preventable firearm deaths. Black Oregonians are roughly 10 times more likely than white people to die by firearm homicide. And the firearm suicide rate in rural Oregon is 2.5 times higher than in urban areas and the state's veteran suicide rate is 37% higher than the national average.

I strongly support the SB1503, Task Force bill, and urge the Task Force to prioritize prevention efforts that are centered around those most impacted by gun deaths and shootings, as well as firearm suicides. I urge the Task Force to analyze and prioritize ongoing, sustainable funding for efforts for prevention work that is making the most meaningful, equitable impact, both for homicide and suicide prevention.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony on this issue.

Sincerely,

Vigdis Bronder Haas, a Portland resident.