

Submitter: Betsy Toll  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: SB1503

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support in favor of SB 1503, the Task Force bill on gun violence prevention and firearm suicide prevention.

As a homeowner who has lived in Oregon for 35 years, and raised both my children here, I find it deeply distressing that deaths and injuries by firearms have become a seemingly immovable feature of our state's culture. Rates of gun violence including suicide across the state may vary in cities and towns, urban and rural areas, but nowhere in Oregon is free of the tragic impacts caused by firearms. Aside from deliberate homicides or suicides, even accidental deaths from poorly stored weapons or untrained use of firearms add to the tragedies that harm our communities.

- Every year, nearly 600 Oregonians die from preventable firearm deaths.
- Black Oregonians are up to 10 times more likely than white people to die by firearm homicide.
- The firearm suicide rate in rural Oregon is 2.5 times higher than in urban areas.
- The suicide rate for Oregon's veterans is a heartbreaking 37% higher than the national average.

We know that gun violence reduction programs exist that can make a difference for our families and communities. It is time that Oregon rise to the challenge and create a Community Safety Task Force that addresses this tragic situation.

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,

Betsy Toll  
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