

Submitter: Rodney Stewart
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1503

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 and grandparent.

Oregon's children are now living under the threat of gun violence to an unprecedented degree. It's hard for me to believe that children now have to live under the constant existential threat of gun violence in places such as their schools, churches, shopping centers, etc. where once they should have felt completely safe. It's now up to the victims (children) to protect themselves by preparing for the unthinkable through active shooter drills. What kind of twisted reasoning is that? We must do something about the gun menace in our society for the children if for no one else.

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. Please do something!

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

Sincerely,
Rodney A. Stewart. Albany, Oregon