

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

This is a message in support of SB 1503, the Task Force bill on gun violence prevention and firearm suicide prevention.

I am writing you as a veteran and former military firearms coach, former law enforcement officer, current gun owner and current registered nurse. As we have continued to see increasing violence and loss of life from firearms in Oregon, particularly over the past four years, the need for action has continued to grow. Sadly, the lack of any clear programs or mechanisms to address this epidemic has meant a continuing death toll for our citizens.

Represented in these deaths are many of our veterans, rural Oregonians and Oregonians of color, all of whom have significantly higher chances of dying by firearm than those without these characteristics, as I'm sure you're aware. This points to real need in specific groups of our citizens, in addition to many others who die each year by firearms either from suicide or at the hands of others.

As someone who has trained others to use and has carried firearms, I'm aware of the finality, instantaneous impact and power for abuse, of these weapons. As a registered nurse, I have seen the impacts of health disparities and systemic health system failures in the lives of patients. However, I believe that with thoughtful, evidence-based and consistent efforts, we can have an impact on saving lives and altering the current trajectory of firearm violence in our state.

I strongly support of 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,  
Brad S. Huit  
Beaverton, Oregon