



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 14, 2024

To: Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Members of the
[House Judiciary Committee](#)

Re: [HB 4135](#) – Related to threatening a mass injury event – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports HB 4135, in accordance with our long-standing positions on violence prevention and gun policy. We believe that the government should play an active role in promoting community safety, preventing violent behavior, and keeping firearms away from those who exhibit violent behavior. This bill creates the crime of threatening a mass injury event, treating it as a felony, punishable by up to five years imprisonment. It also takes the critical step of prohibiting the possession of a firearm by a person convicted of threatening a mass injury event.

It is common knowledge that the number of mass injury events in this country, most often in the form of mass shootings, has greatly escalated in recent years. According to the [Gun Violence Archive](#), there were 656 mass shootings in 2023, compared to 647 in 2022 but down from a record 689 in 2021. Although mass shootings represent a small proportion of the total number of gun violence incidents, the media spends an outsized amount of time reporting on them. An unfortunate consequence of all this media attention is now called “mass shooting contagion,” resulting in an increase in threats and an atmosphere of perpetual fear within our schools and public spaces. Even if the perpetrator does not follow through on the threat, the need to implement emergency protocols and the subsequent harm the threat causes to the public’s sense of wellbeing is very real. Lastly, the act of making a threat is a cry for attention and for help, indicating a need for direct intervention through the mental health and legal systems. We strongly support the provisions in the bill for close supervision during probation and the prohibition on possession of a firearm by those convicted.

These types of crimes have historically been charged as misdemeanors. We believe a deterrent such as HB 4135 is a much-needed step to close the loophole in current law, provide early intervention for troubled individuals, and treat threats of mass injury events as the serious crimes they are. The League commends Rep. Courtney Neron for her persistence since 2018 in bringing this issue forward and in crafting a workable bill. We understand that more fine-tuning may be needed to deal with free speech issues, but we fully agree with the essence of the bill.

We strongly urge your support for HB 4135.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca L. Gladstone".

Rebecca Gladstone
President LWVOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marge Easley".

Marge Easley
Violence Prevention and Gun Policy Portfolio