



March 17, 2025
Oregon House
House Judiciary Committee
Re: Ceasefire Oregon supports HB 3075-1

Chair Kropf, members of the committee, my name is Penny Okamoto. I represent Ceasefire Oregon and am here in support of HB 3075-1. Ceasefire Oregon supports HB 3075-1 and we urge implementation of Measure 114 as soon as allowed by the courts.

Today, I am addressing the issues of fingerprint requirements for background checks and the need for a permit-to-purchase process in addition to a background check when a person acquires a firearm.

Fingerprint requirements for firearm purchase permits help reduce crime through several mechanisms:

1. Enhanced Background Checks – Fingerprints provide a more accurate way to verify an applicant's identity, reducing the likelihood of fraudulent applications and ensuring thorough background checks. This prevents individuals with criminal histories, domestic violence restraining orders, or other disqualifying factors from obtaining firearms.
2. Deterrence for Prohibited Buyers – Requiring fingerprints adds a layer of accountability that may discourage people with criminal intent from attempting to buy a gun illegally. Knowing their fingerprints are on file makes it riskier for prohibited individuals to attempt to bypass restrictions.
3. Prevention of Straw Purchases – Straw purchases occur when someone legally buys a firearm on behalf of a prohibited person. Fingerprinting ties the firearm purchase directly to the buyer, making it harder to conduct these transactions without detection.
4. Crime Solving and Deterrence – If a firearm is later used in a crime, having a fingerprint record can help law enforcement track the original purchaser, potentially identifying straw buyers or traffickers.
5. Reduction in Impulse Purchases – Requiring fingerprints is part of a permit-to-purchase process that often includes a waiting period. This can reduce impulsive firearm purchases, particularly in cases of suicide or acts of violence committed in the heat of the moment.

Research supports the effectiveness of these measures. States with permit-to-purchase laws, including fingerprint requirements, have been shown to experience lower rates of firearm homicides, suicides, and gun trafficking compared to states without such requirements.

Sources for fingerprint data:

Fingerprint requirements for firearm purchase permits have been associated with reductions in firearm-related violence. For instance, after Connecticut implemented a purchaser licensing law in 1995 that mandated in-person applications and fingerprinting, the state experienced a 28% reduction in firearm homicides and a 33% reduction in firearm suicides. ([Johns Hopkins](#))

Research to date has found that in-person application processes (including fingerprinting) are linked to a 9% reduction in the firearm homicide rates in urban counties. ([Journal of Urban Health](#))

Firearm permit-to-purchase (PTP) programs are more effective at reducing gun violence than standard background checks alone because they introduce additional safeguards that help prevent high-risk individuals from acquiring firearms.

A [Tufts University School of Medicine](#) study, published August 1, 2024 in the journal [JAMA Network Open](#), reports that states that require gun permits rather than relying solely on universal background checks see firearm homicide rates, on average, 18% lower than states with background check policies alone.

The Tufts analysis compared firearm homicide data from the 12 states with universal background check laws but no permit requirements (e.g., New York, Nevada, Vermont) and the 7 states with gun permit laws (e.g., Massachusetts, California, Rhode Island) from 1976 to 2022. States in the former group showed slight variations in firearm homicide rates while those with permit laws saw reductions in shooting deaths ranging from 2% to 32%.

Key Reasons for PTP Programs' Effectiveness:

1. Stronger Screening Process - PTP laws typically require individuals to obtain a permit before purchasing a firearm. This process often includes in-person applications at law enforcement agencies, fingerprinting, and longer waiting periods, making it more difficult for prohibited individuals to obtain guns.

In contrast, standard background checks (such as those conducted at the point of sale) rely on instant database checks, which can miss individuals with disqualifying histories if records are incomplete or not up to date.

2. Reductions in Firearm Homicides - Research on Connecticut's PTP law, enacted in 1995, found that it was associated with a 40% reduction in firearm homicide rates ([Rudolph et al., 2015](#), American Journal of Public Health). Conversely, when Missouri repealed its PTP law in 2007, firearm homicide rates increased by 25% ([Webster et al., 2014](#), Journal of Urban Health).

3. Prevention of Firearm Diversion and Trafficking - PTP laws reduce straw purchasing (where someone buys a gun on behalf of a prohibited person) by creating an additional barrier—since buyers must obtain a permit themselves.

A study found that states with PTP laws have significantly lower rates of guns being diverted to criminals shortly after purchase ([Webster et al., 2009](#), Injury Prevention).

4. Impact on Suicide Prevention - PTP laws are also linked to lower firearm suicide rates. Connecticut's law led to a 15% reduction in firearm suicides, while Missouri's repeal resulted in a 16% increase ([Swanson et al., 2015](#), American Journal of Public Health).

5. Stronger Compliance and Enforcement - By requiring permits before purchasing firearms, PTP laws create more oversight and accountability in gun transactions, ensuring that background checks are completed even in private sales.

Conclusion

Permit-to-purchase laws are more effective than standard background checks because they involve more thorough vetting, reduce firearm trafficking, and prevent impulsive firearm acquisitions by high-risk individuals. The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that these policies lead to significant reductions in gun-related homicides, suicides, and illegal gun transfers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. Ceasefire Oregon urges this committee to support HB 3075-1 to help implement Measure 114 as soon as allowed by the courts.

Penny Okamoto
Ceasefire Oregon
Board Member