

Submitter: Craig Van Bruggen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3076

Dear Legislators,

My name is Craig. I am a scientist, Christian, and voter within Bend, OR. I'm also a husband and proud father of a newborn baby girl.

I am also a grocery shopper. Of course, that is a title I share with many of you. Unfortunately, in Oregon, being a grocery shopper is enough to be intertwined with gun violence.

I was in the middle of Safeway on Aug. 28th, 2022 when a 20-year-old gunman with an AR-15 style assault rifle attacked the shoppers in this store. At that time, I was on the phone with my wife discussing ingredients for fall-themed drinks for our wedding taking place in one month. After hearing the shots ring out, I managed to whisper an "I love you" into the phone as I ran to the back of the store and eventually to an exit. I didn't know if I would make it out alive. I live with the memory of a father slowly running with his two young daughters hand-in-hand towards the back exit. I didn't know for a long time if they managed to make it out alive either.

While we were lucky enough to make it out, two gentlemen, Mr. Glenn Bennett and Mr. Donald Surrett Jr., were not. Mr. Bennett died simply for grocery shopping. Mr. Surrett died while heroically fighting back against the shooter.

The assailant obtained his assault rifle the day before from a local firearm dealer. Evidenced by this shooting, any public venue in Oregon is now a target for a deranged gunman. I believe that tackling this issue is going to require a multi-pronged approach: both mental health support and smart firearm regulation. I am not anti-gun, but pro-responsible gun ownership. It is clear, however, that we have left the faucet running, unchecked, through local dealerships to criminals and would-be criminals. This flow is leaving our communities at risk for the next mass shooting.

I fully support this measure to turn the tap and reduce this illegal flow of firearms. We need to do everything in our power to keep the next grocery store or school shooting from ever happening in Oregon. My daughter and your children deserve to live in a safer community.

I thank you for your consideration and I thank you in advance for enacting this common-sense reform.