

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice-Chair Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

I urge you to vote YES on HB 3076 with the -1 amendment. Gun dealers should be licensed and subject to inspection by the State of Oregon.

My neighbor was a “federally licensed” gun dealer. It wasn’t nearly enough.

Last summer, while I was outside enjoying the serenity of working in my garden, I noticed smoke arising from his home, and I heard what I thought were cries for help. I ran into my house to get my phone to call 911, and while I was on the phone, his house literally exploded as I watched, horrified and helpless. The fire department and police were there within 10 minutes, but there was little they could do, as hundreds, probably thousands, of rounds of ammunition continued to explode for close to an hour. We learned later that the fire initially started from a heat lamp in the house and the large initial explosions were probably due to stored black powder that caught fire within minutes. The gun dealer / homeowner somehow managed to escape the fire, but the cries for help I had heard came from a houseguest who was trapped inside. That man died in the fire and explosions. The tall dry grass in the fields around the burning home further threatened many homes, people, and animals in the vicinity. In fact, one home on the downwind side of the gun dealer’s home did have extensive damage.

It was a truly terrifying day. Ours is a very ordinary middle class neighborhood and I realized then that this could happen to others. How is it possible that our neighbor was allowed to have so much explosive material within a few yards of our homes? Our children?

You have the power to protect other neighborhoods. This bill is important for multiple reasons: Licensing and inspecting gun dealers will help keep guns out of the wrong hands and prevent at least some of the senseless gun deaths that happen every year in Oregon. But site inspections could also help prevent gun dealers from improperly storing so much explosive material that they endanger themselves and their neighbors.

Please vote YES for HB 3076-1

Debi Ferrer and Family  
The Dalles