

Submitter: Michael Zalanka  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3074

March 19, 2025

Dear Sen. Prozanski, Sen. Manning, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Michael Zalanka MD, and I am writing to you in support of HB 3704 and SB 429. I am a hospital-based consultation psychiatrist working at a Level 1 trauma hospital in Portland, where I care for individuals who are at risk for and those who have survived suicide attempts. I strongly support House Bill 3074 and Senate Bill 429, as both of these bills have the potential to significantly impact the burden of suicide by firearm in Oregon, particularly among individuals in crisis.

HB 3074 directs the Oregon Judicial Department to study the utilization of extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs) in our state. Oregon's ERPO law has been in place since 2017, yet utilization in Oregon significantly lags rates in other states. As an example,

in 2024 only 200 extreme risk protection orders were issued in Oregon, compared with over 2000 in Connecticut, a state with similar population. As someone who works closely with patients at high risk of suicide, I have seen how access to firearms can dramatically

increase the risk of a fatal outcome during a mental health crisis. By studying how ERPOs are used and exploring their effectiveness in preventing suicides, this bill can provide valuable insights and help to develop better strategies for addressing the intersection of firearms and suicide prevention. ERPOs allow for the temporary removal of firearms from individuals who are at imminent risk, and expanding their use could be a life-saving intervention.

SB 429 proposes a 72-hour waiting period after a background check is completed before an applicant can take possession of a firearm. This bill would provide a critical cooling-off period for individuals who may be in acute distress or crisis. As a psychiatrist

who works with survivors of suicide, I know that many suicides are impulsive acts, often precipitated by intense emotional pain in the moment. A waiting period, while providing no guarantee, could potentially give individuals a moment to reconsider their actions or allow for intervention by loved ones or mental health professionals before a firearm is in their possession.

Both of these bills represent important steps in reducing suicide risk and protecting individuals in crisis. Firearms are the leading method of completed suicide in Oregon,

and I have seen firsthand how a moment of emotional vulnerability, combined with access to a firearm, can lead to tragic outcomes. I believe that HB 3074 and SB 429 are meaningful and balanced approaches to preventing suicide in Oregon, by addressing immediate risk factors and providing the tools needed to intervene before it is too late.

I urge the committee to pass House Bill 3704 and Senate bill 429. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

Michael Zalanka MD