



TO: Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Carla Tilchin, PhD MSPH

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RE: Senate Bill 1015: Grant Program to Fund Community Violence Interventions

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

I am an Assistant Scientist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions with expertise in community violence interventions. As a center that focuses on evidence-based policies to prevent gun violence, the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions supports Senate Bill 1015. This bill establishes a grant program through the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) to fund community violence intervention and prevention (CVI) programs in communities heavily impacted by violence. Oregon's DOJ previously disbursed \$10 million to CVI organizations via [SB 5506](#), introduced in 2023. SB 1015 ensures sustained funding and oversight of evidence-based programs to reduce violence, generating millions of dollars in direct tax-payer savings and making Oregon communities safer.

Effectiveness of Community Violence Interventions

The homicide rate in Oregon [doubled](#) between 2013-2022. Due to the complex factors that lead to violence, policymakers must continue to take a multi-prong approach to reduce this trend. CVI programs cover a [wide range](#) of non-carceral, non-punitive approaches to reduce violence. This includes [violence interruption](#) programs that directly intervene in conflicts to prevent them from escalating to gun violence, [hospital-based](#) interventions that reduce the risk of retaliatory conflict, [cognitive behavioral therapy](#) programs that work to address the impacts of trauma and reduce violent behavior among youth, and [workforce development and life coaching](#) programs that provide continuing education and job training services. CVI programs have been shown to significantly reduce violence across the U.S., with some programs showing up to a [66% reduction in gun violence](#). Programs have also demonstrated decreased [arrest rates](#), decreased [re-victimization rates](#), and decreased [beliefs that violence is an appropriate way to resolve conflicts](#).

Need for A Consistent Funding Mechanism

CVI programs are often grassroots organizations that hire individuals from the neighborhoods they work in because they can reach individuals otherwise [disengaged with institutions](#) and deeply embedded in violent networks. From my professional experience interviewing CVI workers for evaluation research, I know that CVI workers are often in the field not by choice but



by tragedy, having experienced deep personal loss due to gun violence. As a result, for many this work is spiritual, redemptive, and lifesaving, and they bring unmatched dedication and passion to their work. This doggedness is necessary and deserves your support as decisionmakers. Changing the mindset of a violence-involved individual takes time and requires [relentless engagement](#), and a lapse in program funding can be devastating in building that requisite trust. In Chicago, a dramatic cut in CVI funding in 2015 was associated with a dramatic [increase in homicides](#) the following year.

An Investment in Prevention

In 2022, Oregon reported [212 fatal gun violence victims](#). The estimated direct cost to Oregon taxpayers per homicide victim is [\\$820,896](#). Cumulatively, this equates to over \$174 million in direct costs from homicides in 2022 alone. Based on Oregon's [previous \\$10 million investment](#) in CVI, if the programs collectively prevented 13 homicides, the program would have paid for itself. If one considers the additional estimated [\\$14 million in indirect costs](#) per homicide victim, SB 1015 will save Oregonians money, and more importantly, it will save lives. Accordingly, I and the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on Senate Bill 1015.