

Chairman Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in support of SB 941. I am unable to attend the hearing on Wednesday, which is unfortunate because I feel strongly about the need for greater gun safety in our state and I believe this bill is a positive step in that direction.

I am a husband, a father, a grandfather and a great grandfather as well as a close friend of many residents of Oregon. These are all people who are very dear to me, and it would devastate me to lose any one of them to gun violence.

Though I've never owned a weapon myself, I am not opposed to safe gun ownership. Three of my family members are in law enforcement, and they are all highly trained and practiced in the safe use of weapons.

I always feel safe around them when they are armed, but I've been on ride-alongs with them where it's been clear that the domestic situations they've been called to present a clear and immediate danger to everyone involved. And in several instances it had not been the first time police had been called to the home. Often the inhabitants had had a history with the police and were known by them on a first-name basis.

The police I've talked to about this have all stated that the greatest danger they face is the threat of being shot at by someone with a history of domestic violence or mental instability.

While I don't own a weapon myself, I did shoot a man once by mistake. It was in a fire fight in Vietnam, and the man was a member of my own platoon. And while it was acknowledged that I had done all the right things by the book, in the chaos of battle I pulled the trigger and the result could have been tragic.

I learned from that experience that pulling the trigger should never be the first reaction to a confusing or frightening situation; pulling the trigger should be the last resort. But do we know that every gun owner has that same understanding?

Would it not be prudent, if we know that a person has a history or diagnosis of violent behavior, that we protect him and those around him by taking steps to ensure that he not have access to a weapon?

Please ensure that SB 941 becomes law.

I thank you on behalf of my grandchildren and great grandchildren.

*Dick*

Dick Willis  
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