



April 1, 2015

Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
Salem, Oregon

Dear Chair Prozanski and Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

I am Dr. Brenna Lewis, a pediatrician in Oregon and a board member of Ceasefire Oregon. Today, I am speaking on behalf of Ceasefire Oregon, in support of SB 941.

As a pediatrician, I know that regardless of age, the most common causes of death in my patients are not the diseases that I studied to diagnose and treat in medical school and my pediatric training, but instead accidents, suicide, and homicide - many of which are firearm related. In fact, according to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, firearm-related deaths are one of the top three causes of death in American youth.¹

I have seen first hand the devastating effects of gun violence on the young people of this state, and their parents. And not just the bodily harm, but the trauma and anxiety induced by hearing about school shootings, unintentional gun injuries, or other firearm related injuries or deaths in children both in our state and across the nation.

In Oregon in 2014 alone, an estimated 38,000 to 50,000 guns were transferred privately, without a background check through private sellers.² Felons, domestic abusers and the dangerously mentally ill can avoid the background check system by purchasing a gun through a private sale with no questions asked.

I am encouraged that today we are discussing a bill to address this. In the medical field, research has afforded us many powerful treatments to cure many diseases, but no single drug can cure all disease. Similarly, one law cannot end all gun violence. However, any step we can take to minimize gun related harm to the children of Oregon is a step work taking, and SB 941 is one such step.

It is my hope that you think about the patients of mine that are too young to vote, and too young to travel to Salem to meet you when voting on this bill. It is my hope that you chose to protect them from firearm death or injury by preventing felons, domestic abusers, and those who are a danger to themselves or others due to mental illness by supporting this bill.

Thank you,

Dr. Brenna Lewis
Board Member
Ceasefire Oregon

1. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, US Centers for Disease and Prevention. Web-Based Injury Statistics Query & Reporting Systems (WISQARS) Injury Mortality Reports, 1999-2009, for national, regional, and states (May, 2012). Available at http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal_injury_reports.html. Accessed June 8, 2012.

2. The precise number of guns that are transferred in Oregon each year without background checks is unknown. One national estimate, based on a 1996 study, is that 14-22% of firearms are obtained in private transactions from persons who are not required to conduct a background check (and are not family members). (Philip J. Cook and Jens Ludwig, *Guns in America*, 1996, available at <http://www.policefoundation.org/content/guns-america>, which found that 30-40% of guns were obtained from private sources in a sample group; a subsequent analysis of data found that 14-21% of guns were purchased without background checks, after intra-familial transfers were excluded.) In Oregon, that percentage would be slightly lower because background checks are required for all transactions at gun shows, including private sales. Figures are based on Oregon State Police 2014 data of 233,878 firearms background checks performed.