



## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Representative Hoyle, Chair, House Committee on Rules  
Representative Smith Warner, Vice-Chair, House Committee on Rules  
Representative Gilliam, Vice-Chair, House Committee on Rules  
Members of the House Committee on Rules

From: Bryan Boehringer, OMA Government Relations  
Courtnei Dresser, OMA Government Relations

Date: April 22, 2015

Re: Support for SB 941-A – Background Checks on Firearm Transfers

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The OMA supports SB 941-A as an initiative that strengthens existing gun laws by requiring background checks for private gun sales transfers, with the exception of sales to immediate family members. The OMA recognizes that gun safety is a major factor in morbidity and mortality and believes that requiring background checks on gun sales and transfers is a preventative measure that works. From 1994 to 2008, according to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), background checks have prevented 1.8 million prohibited people in the United States, including felons and the mentally ill, from buying guns.

SB 941-A strengthens Oregon's existing law by requiring a gun dealer to complete a background check on a potential gun buyer prior to the completion of the sale. This is either done in person, where the private seller of a gun appears with the buyer before a gun dealer or if the two parties live more than 40 miles apart, the seller can ship the gun to the gun dealer and the gun dealer transfers the gun after the completion of the background check. Current law only requires purchasers of guns sold by licensed dealers or sellers at gun shows to be subject to a background check. This expanded background check will help keep guns out of the hands of criminals, people who are mentally ill and others who should not have guns. Background checks do not prevent law abiding citizens from selling, buying or owning guns.

A recently published study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on the correlation between firearm legislation and firearm-related fatalities found that states with background checks on private sales had 16 percent lower firearm fatality rates.<sup>i</sup> In Oregon, from 2007 – 2010, 1,625 citizens died from firearm-related deaths; as many as 260 lives may have been spared if Oregon had universal background checks in that same time period.

OMA members understand the importance of gun safety for their patients and support preventative measures that ensure guns are obtained and stored appropriately in the home. Universal background checks are a step in the right direction; background checks are a deterrent to those who shouldn't buy guns, thereby increasing the safety of their patients.

We urge your support of SB 941-A.

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<sup>i</sup> Fleegler et. al (2013). "Firearm Legislation and Firearm-Related Fatalities in the United States," *Journal of American Medical Association*.