

My name is Rebecca Cohen. I am a mother, step-mother, business owner, and volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. I'm here today to ask you to pass SB941 and close the private sales loophole in Oregon's background check law.

Gun violence shatters families and communities. I know this first-hand, because I experienced it at age 14. I was in the 8th grade. It was a spring morning, and I was getting ready for school. The phone rang, and suddenly I heard my mother scream a piercing, anguished scream. This was how I learned that my uncle Alan had been shot by a disgruntled employee and left to die. The news was incongruous. It made no sense. The words 'Uncle Alan' and 'Shot to Death' had no business sharing a sentence.

Those who oppose passing universal background checks often make the argument that background checks wouldn't have stopped the shooting at Clackamas Town Center; they wouldn't have stopped the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School; they may not have even stopped my uncle's murder.

But those of us working for sensible gun safety legislation don't harbor fantasies that legislation will retroactively undo past tragedies. We have no illusion that new laws will somehow bring back our lost loved ones. We work to pass universal background checks because we want to spare other families from receiving that dreadful phone call. We advocate for gun safety because we know that it will reduce the number of injuries, suicides, and murders committed with guns.

Closing the loophole in Oregon's background check system will not stop every gun crime or save every life. But it will reduce gun crime and save many lives. Other states with universal background checks have proven that when the loophole is closed, there are demonstrably fewer lives devastated by guns.

Thank you.