

**Hearing:** April 17, 2017 at 8:00am (Room HR 50)

Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Valerie Berg and I am a citizen and concerned voter in Oregon. I'm writing in support of SB 868 regarding establishing Extreme Risk Protective Orders in Oregon. From a personal experience, one of my best friends committed suicide with a gun after everyone, including his friends and family, was concerned about his behavior and mental stability. We had no recourse – he'd made threats to his own safety a number of times and had minimally acted out violence on himself. At the time, there was no process for law enforcement to take his firearms (that he legally obtained) while a hearing took place to determine if he was in a stable place to maintain them, or if a short time without them was in his own best interest. I wish we'd had that opportunity. When I and many others learned of his tragic death, we were not surprised, just sad and felt as though there wasn't much we could have done to stop it. I believe a process like ERPOs would have gone a long way to save my friend's life, but I'm hoping that it can help save others going forward. I'm hopeful it's the first step to protecting individuals like my friend, who were going through a tough time and didn't see a way out. I'm hoping it can protect victims of domestic abuse. I'm hoping it can protect children who can't protect themselves. I think it's a way to protect people who need it.

From a non-personal perspective, this bill balances the minor inconvenience of not having access to firearms for a short period of time with the extreme benefit of saving lives – those of the firearm owner and other individuals. It's time to enact reasonable safer firearms laws to protect our citizens, including the firearms owners themselves.

Thank you for considering this bill and for working to protect our citizens.

**Valerie Berg**

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