



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

April 13, 2017

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair

Re: SB 868, Extreme Risk Protection Order – **Support**

The League of Women Voters supports the active role of government in preventing violence. We believe that the passage of SB 868 will save lives by removing guns temporarily from individuals who clearly demonstrate they are a danger to themselves and others. It fills a serious gap in current statutes by establishing a legal protocol for family or household members, as well as peace officers, to take immediate action in emergency situations, such as threat of suicide or acts of violence toward others. We approve of language in the bill that places the burden of proof on the petitioner and clearly stipulates the conditions and processes for firearm removal and return.

We believe that HB 868 will be an invaluable tool for victims of domestic violence, but we also want to emphasize its importance for suicide prevention. Oregon's suicide rate is among the highest in the nation, is increasing yearly, and is more likely than not to involve a gun. The biggest increase is among teens and older males, particularly in rural areas, which is also the demographic with the highest gun ownership. Suicide is usually an impulsive act by an individual in crisis. If a gun is present, it is most likely the means and will most likely be fatal. HB 868 is a proactive step to reduce the risk of suicide by restricting access to lethal means.

It is also important to point out that gun safety efforts such as this have the added benefit of cost savings to taxpayers. When both direct and indirect costs are considered, gun violence costs each American more than \$700 a year. Whatever we can do to prevent needless violence is a win for all of us.

We believe that HB 868 is not an abridgement of Second Amendment rights. The Supreme Court's *Columbia v. Heller* decision clearly states that the right to own a gun is not unlimited and does not prohibit reasonable government regulations. This bill is a sensible violence prevention tool, restricting gun access for a limited time and providing due process for reinstatement of gun rights.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Marge Easley in black ink.

Marge Easley
Gun Safety Portfolio Specialist