

To: Chair Jeff Barker; Vice Chairs Williamson and Olson; Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Erin Greenawald, Domestic Violence Resource Prosecutor, ON BEHALF of the Attorney General of the State of Oregon and the Oregon Department of Justice

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 4145

Date: 2/6/2018

Chair Barker and members of the committee:

The introduction of guns into a “domestic violence” relationship and/or a stalking situation greatly increases the potential for lethality for victims (and perpetrators), as well as the police officers who often have to intervene in domestic violence situations. There is also information demonstrating that a majority of the mass shootings in the United States are related to domestic or family violence. Furthermore, perpetrators of mass shootings (not related to domestic or family violence) often have a previous history of domestic violence.ⁱ In addition to lethal incidents involving domestic violence perpetrators and guns, it has been shown that abusers who possess firearms tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their victims. Finally, it’s important to remember that perpetrators of stalking too often use firearms to threaten or kill their victims.

The following statistics bear out the truth of these statements:

Abused women are **five times** more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser owns a firearm.ⁱⁱ Domestic violence assaults involving a gun are **twelve times** more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force.ⁱⁱⁱ A perpetrator’s prior threat or assault with a firearm results in **twenty times higher risk** of death in the context of an intimate partner relationship.^{iv} **76% of women murdered** by intimate partners and 85% of women who survived murder attempts were stalked.^v

Information about DV-related deaths in Oregon corroborates the national studies:

DV-related homicides on average comprise 20% of all violent deaths in Oregon.^{vi} Sixty-plus percent of all DV-related homicides in Oregon are the result of a gunshot wound.^{vii} Nearly 75% of all homicide/suicides are DV-related. 85% (or more) involve the use of a firearm.^{viii}

As stated above, it’s not just domestic violence victims who are at risk from perpetrators with guns. Police officers and members of the public are in great danger of injury or death when identified DV offenders own, possess, or have access to firearms.^{ix}

Over the years, Oregon has taken laudable steps to protect domestic violence and stalking victims. Oregon’s recognition that stalking is a serious and dangerous crime is reflected in the fact that a second stalking conviction is a felony offense. In 2015, Oregon passed SB 525 (now codified at ORS 166.255) which mandates that *certain* domestic violence misdemeanants or people subject to qualifying Restraining Orders be dispossessed of firearms. However, there is still more to do. HB 4145 seeks to close a number of remaining loopholes in our legal protections for victims of domestic violence and stalking. Specifically, HB 4145 seeks to expand the category of individuals protected from possible firearm injury by adding to the list of qualifying prohibitions “person convicted of stalking,” and those who perpetrate not just against “intimate partners” but also “family and household members.”

HB 4145 also seeks to ensure more effective enforcement of these statutory prohibitions by improving data entry and notification requirements. These changes would serve to ensure improved safety for domestic violence and stalking victims.

Thank you for your work on these important issues.

I urge you to support HB4145.

Erin Greenawald

ⁱ Shifman, Pamela and Tillet, Salamisha, *To Stop Violence, Start at Home*. New York Times Op-ed (February 2, 2015).

ⁱⁱ Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al. Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships. Results from a multisite Case Control Study, 93 Am. J. Pub. Health 1089, 1092 (July 2003).

ⁱⁱⁱ Linda E. Saltzman, et al., Weapon Involvement and Injury Outcomes in Family and Intimate Assaults. 267 JAMA, 3043-3047 (1992).

^{iv} Kellermann AL, Rivara FP, Rushforth NB, et al. Gun ownership as a risk factor for homicide in the home. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 1993;329(15):1084-1091.

^v McFarlane, J. M., Campbell, J. C., Wilt, S., Sachs, C. J., Ulrich, Y. & Xu, X. (1999). Stalking and intimate partner femicide. *Homicide Studies*, 3(4), 300-316.

^{vi} Shen X., Millet L., "Homicides Related to Intimate Partner Violence in Oregon: A Seven Year Review," Oregon Department of Human Services (2010) Portland, Oregon.

^{vii} Shen X., Millet L., "Homicide Trends and Characteristics in Oregon, 2014 Report," Oregon Health Authority, Portland, Oregon.

^{viii} Shen X., Millet L., "Violent Deaths in Oregon: 2011," Oregon Health Authority, Portland, Oregon.

^{ix} Police Chief Magazine: December, 2012.; Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al., Risk Factors For Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From A Multi-Site Case Control Study, 93 Am. J. of Public Health 1089, 1092 (2003), abstract available at <http://www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/93/7/1089>; <http://jiv.sagepub.com/content/28/6/1143.abstract>