



PRESS RELEASE

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House Votes to Close Boyfriend and Stalker Gun Loopholes

Important gun violence prevention legislation seeks to protect survivors

SALEM – The Oregon House of Representatives today passed [House Bill 4145A](#) which closes the boyfriend and stalker firearm loopholes, providing critical safety measures for survivors of domestic violence and stalking.

Rep. Jeff Barker (D-Aloha) and Rep. Jennifer Williamson (D-Portland) carried the legislation on the floor of the house.

“This legislation is about matching our domestic violence laws with the reality of the lives of individuals in our state and the threats they face every day,” Rep. Barker said. “We cannot allow the suffering of Oregonians who have already survived domestic violence and stalking to be compounded by a law that treats them as second class citizens simply because they weren’t married to their abusers.”

Under current law, it is illegal for a person to knowingly possess a firearm or ammunition if they have been convicted of a violent crime against an intimate partner, or are subject to a stalking order by an intimate partner. However, there exists a “boyfriend loophole,” which allows convicted domestic abusers to continue to legally possess firearms if they were not married to, the parent of a child with, or living with the target of their abuse. Current law also leaves out stalking as a qualifying misdemeanor.

“Among the alarming statistics that define this debate, we know that the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that a woman will be killed,” Rep. Williamson said. “That is unacceptable.”

House Bill 4145 closes the boyfriend loophole by aligning the definition of a domestic violence conviction in Oregon’s Unlawful Possession of a Firearms statute with the existing definition of domestic violence elsewhere in Oregon law. It also adds a misdemeanor stalking conviction as a qualifying for the same protections as other domestic violence misdemeanors.

This legislation also adds accountability, by improving reporting requirements for law enforcement agencies. It requires misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence to be reported to the Department of State Police to ensure illegal purchasing attempts are logged and tracked so that our system can continue to improve.

Among those who spoke on the bill were Rep. Paul Evans (D-Monmouth).

“This measure reflects a bipartisan approach to the very real challenges associated with combating gun violence – as it relates to domestic relations,” Rep. Evans said. “We must not accept the notion that because we cannot solve all things, we must stand idle, and do nothing.”

Rep. Mark Meek (D-Gladstone) added that it is time to close this loophole to ensure more Oregonians are protected.

“There is no reason that we should not be working to keep guns out the hands of all convicted domestic abusers and of all convicted stalkers,” Rep. Meek said. “We owe it to every Oregonian to make sure that firearms are kept out of the hands of those who would do harm to others.”

In an emotional speech, Rep. Janeen Sollman (D-Hillsboro) recounted the domestic violence she faced as a child and how it could have had a very different outcome.

“My mom did all she could to keep us safe and regrettably thought that returning to our house on the hill in Gales Creek for more forgiveness and promises was the only choice for us,” Rep. Sollman said on the floor. “Our continuing story had countless, sober moments from my father. I am, in a very strange way thankful we had those opportunities, because I believe for certain that if it weren’t for my father’s absolute intense hatred of guns, our story would have a very different ending.”

The bill, which passed 37 to 23, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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