



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Legislators Pass Historic Community Violence Prevention Investments**

*Oregon Legislature invests in evidence and community-based solutions to break the cycle of violence*

**SALEM, Ore.** - Today, the Oregon Legislature is making historic bipartisan investments in evidence-based community violence prevention, ensuring that Oregonians will have the tools and resources they need to break the cycle of violence and keep communities safe.

“Community violence is costing our state and our communities dearly - every part of Oregon has been touched by gun violence, suicide, and domestic violence,” [Rep. Lisa Reynolds](#) (D-Portland) said. “I was proud to spearhead this effort in the legislature to fund critical investments to turn the tide of community violence and help provide a safer, more inclusive state for us all.”

The state will invest \$15 million towards a grant program to fund upstream solutions to community violence. These solutions include summer jobs, mentorship, and training programs for at-risk youth, “greening” blighted areas, offering mental health and addiction support, and providing much-needed resources to victims of crime.

Such programs have repeatedly been shown to significantly reduce violent crime and keep people out of the criminal justice system. These investments will help stop violence before it starts, keeping Oregon’s communities safe and building a stronger future for all.

“Gun violence has long been endemic in our communities, we have an opportunity to honor the dead and fight for the living by making meaningful investments in holistic community violence prevention,” said [Sen. Lawrence Spence](#) (D-Portland and Tigard), “I am a firm believer that upstream investments provide communities with the tools necessary to address the root causes of violence.”

This program will be administered by the Oregon Department of Justice’s Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division, and a group of community stakeholders will inform the Division’s work to develop guidelines and ensure that this money is targeted towards the communities and organizations across the state that need it most.

“Violence has increased exponentially in Oregon in recent years. To tackle this problem we need bigger investments in community-based programs,” said [Attorney General Rosenblum](#). “Our Crime Victims and Survivor Services Division is uniquely equipped to help tackle this significant public health problem by administering these grants--and to do it right now. I want to thank the many advocates and legislative partners who have made this possible.”

“We need to do everything we can to keep our communities safe and reduce violent crime. It’s not enough to tend to those who have been harmed by violence. We must do all we can to prevent it,” said [Sen. Deb Patterson](#) (D-Salem). “By investing wisely in safer and healthier communities, we can proactively interrupt cycles of violence, and ultimately help our law enforcement officers do their important work.”

“With the increase in violence across our state, the legislature's job is undeniable. This needs to be addressed, and resources must be allocated for safer communities. Prioritizing funding for these programs is a step in the right direction and proof that when we work together, we can find solutions to address Oregonians' critical needs,” said [Rep. Jack Zika](#) (R-Redmond).

In addition, the legislature passed HB 4045, setting up the framework to support and expand hospital-based violence prevention programs in Oregon. Victims of violent crime are far more likely to be injured again, as well as to perpetrate violence themselves. Hospital-based violence prevention programs send trained community ambassadors into emergency rooms to assist these victims, offering them the guidance and support they need to make a healthy recovery. These evidence-based strategies are proven to reduce violent reinjury and prevent victims from perpetuating the cycle of violence. Former House Speaker Tina Kotek was instrumental in introducing this concept and building the coalition around it, and we thank her for her effort.

“As a former prosecutor, I particularly admire evidence-based interventions, to interrupt cycles of crime, recidivism, trauma, and violence,” said [Sen. Kate Lieber](#) (D-Beaverton). “Studies have shown that almost half of the victims of community violence will become injured again - and for

20%, that second injury will prove fatal. HB 4045 presents an opportunity to expand on proven practices for interrupting cycles of violence, hospital-based violence intervention programs.”

HB 4045 invests \$4 million to support and expand existing programs, and \$1 million to start up new hospital-based violence prevention programs outside of the Portland area. Additionally, this bill will professionalize and certify providers and allow Oregon to seek Medicaid reimbursement for these programs, providing long-term stable funding for crucial community interventions.

"One of the jobs we are tasked with as legislators is protecting Oregon's most vulnerable citizens," said [Rep. Greg Smith](#) (R-Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Sherman & Wasco Counties). "HB 4045 does this by supporting intervention and prevention measures against community violence. I applaud Representative Reynolds for championing this legislation and I am proud to support it along with her."

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