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Landmark Gun Safety Bill Clears Final Vote

SALEM – The Oregon Senate repassed Senate Bill 554 on a concurrence vote – approving modifications made in the House to add storage and safety requirements among the bill’s components. The bill passed 17-7.

“Gun violence is a public health crisis. We’ve lost far too many loved ones to shootings and today we took a meaningful step toward preventing these unspeakable tragedies,” said Senator Ginny Burdick (D-Portland) who introduced Senate Bill 554.

Senate Bill 554 changes Oregon’s firearm laws in a variety of ways. As previously approved by the Senate, the bill allows school districts and public higher education institutions to prohibit the carrying of a firearm even if the individual possesses a Concealed Handgun License (CHL).

“Guns should not influence the functioning of democracy. When armed insurrectionists forced their way into the State Capitol late last year, we were all threatened. When armed individuals in paramilitary garb have hovered over the Senate Floor or the desks of our staff while spouting hate, it’s threatening,” said Senator Burdick. “In addition, it’s incredibly traumatic for those who have experienced gun violence. Attempting to influence legislation through veiled and overt threats is wrong.”

In addition to empowering public education institutions to protect students and staff, Senate Bill 554 requires firearms to be stored safely. The gun can be stored using a cable lock, a storage container or safe, or in a gun room. A storage container or cable lock must also be utilized when transferring a firearm. In addition, the bill includes reporting requirements for an owner of a firearm when the firearm is lost or stolen.

“Suicides are increasing. Gun violence is increasing. A firearm that is not safely stored is a threat,” said Senator Burdick. “Whether someone steals that firearm to do harm to another person, or a child is killed because they mistake a weapon for a toy, or someone in an acute mental health crisis accesses a gun – it’s a tragedy, and we can help prevent these tragedies. By passing Senate Bill 554 today, we help prevent these tragedies.”

Lifesaving gun safety policies is legacy work for Senator Burdick. With the passage of Senate Bill 554 she again demonstrates her commitment to public health, safety and to ensuring Oregonians can thrive in a future free from senseless gun violence.

“Passing a safe storage policy for firearms and improving safety in our public buildings and our State Capitol is overdue – I’m grateful for the dedication of my partners in both chambers and for their commitment to Oregonians’ lives, health and safety,” said Senator Burdick.

After today’s concurrence vote, Senate Bill 554 goes to Governor Kate Brown for her signature and will take effect the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

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