

**Senator Ted Ferrioli  
Senate District 30**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Senate Republican Leader Responds to Questions About Preventing Firearm Tragedies**

Salem, Ore. - Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) responded to questions regarding the steps Oregon has taken to prevent firearm tragedies following the tragic shooting at Umpqua Community College last week.

"As all of Oregon struggles to find answers after last week's tragedy, Oregonians want to know what Members of the Legislature have done and are doing to make it harder for criminals and those suffering from mental illness to access firearms," said Ferrioli. "In 2014, I requested a new Legislative Counsel opinion regarding the authority of Oregon State Police to investigate "failed" firearms purchase background checks. After confirming the authority of OSP to conduct such investigations, I met with top law enforcement officials to request they make such investigations a high priority.

"As a result of my actions, Oregon State Police (OSP) began investigating failed background checks, ensuring Oregon's background check laws are fully enforced.

"For instance, during August 2015, 71 failed background checks from gun shows or firearms retailers were referred by Oregon State Police investigators to local police

and prosecutors for enforcement. 53 additional failed background checks are currently under investigation by the OSP.

"Beyond the enforcement of current firearm background check laws, we in the legislature made significant investments in mental health funding between 2013 and 2015. These included a new cigarette tax dedicated to mental health funding that raised \$20 million in the first biennium for youth mental health services; \$10 million in targeted rental assistance to help stabilize those suffering from mental illness; a 13.5% increase in total funds for Oregon Health Authority's Addictions and Mental Health program between 2013 and 2015; and additional investments in the 2015-2017 budget for community mental health programs, a new statewide Mental Health Crisis Intervention program, peer-delivered services, and mobile crisis services."

"We dedicated over \$1 billion for addictions and mental health services in the 2015-2017 budget," explained Ferrioli. "That is more than the budgets for OSP, District Attorneys, DEQ, the Department of Agriculture, Parks and Recreation, the entire Legislative Branch, and the State Library combined. Mental health services continues to be a top priority for Oregonians, and the legislature strives to demonstrate our commitment to helping those suffering."

"What happened in Roseburg last week can only be described as a tragedy," continued Ferrioli. "We will continue to find ways to help Oregonians struggling with mental illness and addiction and will continue to demand background check laws are fully enforced to keep guns out of the hands of those whose access should be denied."

For more information on the Oregon State Police's latest background check enforcement report, [see the attached document provided by the OSP.](#)

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