

# Public Comment:

10.a ORS 166.377 Possession of Firearms in Certain Public Buildings / ORS 166.377 posesión de armas de fuego en ciertos edificios públicos

## Faye Melius

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad  
Turner OR

Jul 8, 2022

Salem Keizer School District  
2450 Lancaster Dr NE  
Salem OR 97305

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Directors for the Salem Keizer School District:

I am submitting testimony today as a long time Salem resident who has had two children graduate from the Salem Keizer School District. I'm also a volunteer with the local chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, and I'm writing to ask you to use your power under Oregon's new gun safety law to keep the school community safer from gun violence.

Senate Bill 554 allows schools to prohibit firearms, regardless of whether someone has a concealed handgun license (CHL). Under current law, firearms are already prohibited on school property, but there is an exception for individuals with CHLs. Once SB 554 is in effect, districts can choose to adopt a new policy prohibiting all firearms on school property. Moms Demand Action volunteers advocated for this bill in the legislature, alongside stakeholders like the Oregon Education Association and the Oregon School Boards Association.

Studies have shown that the presence of guns in schools does not make anyone safer; to the contrary, it puts teachers, students and staff at greater risk. Oregon is one of only eight states that allow individuals with concealed handgun licenses to possess a firearm in K-12 schools. While gun violence is rare, it occurs with enough frequency that school districts should address this concern. In 2018, according to the Associated Press, more than 30 publicly reported mishaps were reported involving firearms brought onto school grounds. Guns went off by mistake; were fired by "curious or unruly students"; or were left unattended in bathroom stalls, locker rooms, and elsewhere on school grounds.

The new law will also require gun owners to store their firearms securely while not under their control. Since 2019, dozens of school districts across the country have passed resolutions and adopted school district policies to require that information be sent home with students to educate parents on their responsibility under existing state laws that require gun owners to securely store any firearms they own. Schools are uniquely positioned to build awareness for secure firearm storage practices at home to keep students and school communities safe.

Salem Keizer School District should use their ability under the new law to enact a policy prohibiting guns on school property. We also urge the district to notify parents of the new policy, and include information about the importance of secure gun storage and the requirements of Oregon's new secure storage law. After Oregon saw record-breaking gun sales in 2020 — nearly twice the number sold in 2019 — now is the time for the district to use all available tools at their disposal to keep the school community safer as we return to full-time in-person instruction.

Sincerely,

Faye Melius  
Area Lead  
Moms Demand Action

**Submitted:** 7/8/2022 22:15:02

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## Hella Nordberg

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this discussion. As a US citizen who was raised in Germany, where gun laws are much more strict and school shootings are not even something people consider, it is sad that it is so very real and present in my home country. Students should be able to learn and navigate the trials and tribulations of growing up without having to also worry about being shot. This meeting has no control over national or state gun laws but we can at least try to keep guns away from our schools. I support banning all guns from school grounds just like we do for medical clinics and legislative buildings. Nobody should be even tempted to pull out a gun and shoot at or around our kids. Please support a complete gun free zone for our Salem-Keizer schools. Thank you.

**Submitted:** 7/11/2022 12:55:32

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## Rachel Dewey Thorsett

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad  
Salem

I am writing in support of the proposed policy to prohibit weapons, including concealed weapons, per ORS 166.377. Guns and other weapons in schools do not make students safer. The chances of an armed teacher, staff member or visitor successfully confronting an armed attacker are minuscule, while the chances of a weapon falling into the wrong hands through theft or negligence are not. I support the proposed policy as written, and I urge you to bring it back unchanged for a second reading and adoption.

**Submitted:** 7/11/2022 10:16:29

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**Susan Callahan**

Student / Estudiante

Salem

Dear SKPS School Board,

In accordance with Senate Bill 554, we support PROHIBITING all weapons, including concealed weapons, in Salem-Keizer schools and direct the superintendent to develop and enact administrative policy to achieve this. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Callahan and Dan Sewell, MD (SKPS parents)

**Submitted:** 7/11/2022 8:09:55

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## Deborah Patterson

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad  
Salem

SB 554 which was passed by the Oregon State Legislature in 2021, grants authority to local school boards and certain other public entities to prohibit possession of firearms in schools and certain other public buildings. I strongly urge the SKSD Board of Directors to join other school districts which have already moved to disallow possession of firearms in schools.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Deb Patterson  
Parent of two SKSD graduates

**Submitted:** 7/11/2022 11:03:33

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## Adela Bravo

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

Hola miembros de la junta escolar de Salem-Keizer. Mi nombre es Adela Bravo y soy madre de 2 niños en el distrito escolar. Les escribo a ustedes para pedirles que prohíban portar armas ocultas en las escuelas de Salem-Keizer. Como madre, me sentiría muy segura mandando a mis hijos a la escuela sabiendo que Salem-Keizer prohíbe las armas ocultas. Las armas son peligrosas. Debemos de priorizar la seguridad de los estudiantes. Les urjo que voten a favor de prohibir el porte de armas ocultas en el distrito escolar de Salem-Keizer. Gracias.

Auto translated:

Hello Salem-Keizer School Board Members. My name is Adela Bravo and I am a mother of 2 children in the school district. I am writing to ask you to prohibit the carrying of concealed weapons in Salem-Keizer schools. As a mother, I would feel very safe sending my children to school knowing that Salem-Keizer prohibits concealed weapons. Weapons are dangerous. We must prioritize the safety of students. I urge you to vote to ban the carrying of concealed weapons in the Salem-Keizer School District. Thank you.

**Submitted:** 7/11/2022 14:48:31

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## Hilary Uhlig

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad  
Hillsboro, submitting on behalf of Salem Moms Demand Action

We are parents, students, and community members in the Salem-Keizer School District who volunteer with local chapters of Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We are writing to ask you to use your power under Oregon's new gun safety law to keep the school community safer from gun violence.

Senate Bill 554, which went into effect September 25, 2021, allows universities and K-12 schools to prohibit firearms on school property, regardless of whether someone has a concealed handgun license (CHL). Under current law, firearms are already prohibited on school property, but there is an exception for individuals with CHLs. Now that SB 554 is in effect, districts can choose to adopt a new policy prohibiting firearms on school property — regardless of who carries them. Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action volunteers advocated for this bill in the legislature, alongside stakeholders like the Oregon Education Association and the Oregon School Boards Association. OSBA has released policy language (KGBB) as guidance for local school boards.

Studies have shown that the presence of guns in schools does not make anyone safer; to the contrary, it puts teachers, students and staff at greater risk. Oregon is one of only eight states that allow individuals with concealed handgun licenses to possess a firearm in K-12 schools. While gun violence is rare, it occurs with enough frequency that school districts should address this concern. In 2018, according to the Associated Press, more than 30 publicly reported mishaps were reported involving firearms brought onto school grounds. Guns went off by mistake; were fired by “curious or unruly students”; or were left unattended in bathroom stalls, locker rooms, and elsewhere on school grounds.

The new law also requires gun owners to store their firearms securely while not under their control. Since 2019, dozens of school districts across the country have passed resolutions and adopted school district policies to require that information be sent home with students to educate parents on their responsibility under existing state laws that require gun owners to securely store any firearms they own. Schools are uniquely positioned to build awareness for secure firearm storage practices at home to keep students and school communities safe.

We urge the Salem-Keizer School Board to use their ability under the new law to enact a policy prohibiting guns on school property. We also urge the district to notify parents of the new policy, and include information about the importance of secure gun storage and the requirements of Oregon's new secure storage law. Now is the time for the district to use all available tools at their disposal to keep the school community safer as we return to full-time in-person instruction.

Sincerely,

Salem area Moms Demand Action (please see email sent on 7/11 from Lillie Manvel for full list of names in support.)

**Submitted:** 7/11/2022 14:37:05

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## Joseph Whitson

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad  
Salem

Dear Salem Keizer School Board:

In accordance with Senate Bill 554, we support PROHIBITING ALL WEAPONS, INCLUDING CONCEALED WEAPONS, in all Salem-Keizer schools and direct the superintendent to develop and enact administrative policies to achieve this goal.

Thank You!

Ai-Lan and Joe Whitson, DO, MPH (Community members as well as former SKPS parents)

**Submitted:** 7/11/2022 10:19:43

# Public Comment:

District policies

## Rebecca G

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

I am a long time Salem resident, parent, and district staff member. I have had the unique experience to observe what is happening in the district from a variety of perspectives. I am not politically or religiously affiliated, but am simply somebody who cares deeply about our students, schools, and communities.

In the past couple of years, it has broken my heart to watch our communities be torn apart. I have watched as parents struggle to understand decisions the board is making, wondering if they truly have students' best interest at heart. Decisions made in the recent past have shocked many families – normalizing novel, extreme, and highly contentious gender/sexual ideology, excluding parents from school buildings, violence on the rise, disrespecting body autonomy by pushing covid policies that brought discomfort to many, etc.

I have watched perfectly suited teachers be moved from school to school without consideration of what is best for individual schools and their communities. I see parents fearing if their students will ever catch up from all the lost learning due to extending CDL too long and masking during critical developmental stages. Good, caring, teachers that are cornerstones in the community are leaving our schools because they feel they are on the verge of being forced to comply with policies that they know harm children. With many teachers exiting the district, the district is justifying class size numbers that go against all research on what is best for learning, thus families further lose their trust in the district. The community is beginning to bond over the disappointment in our public schools, and the common talk on the street is how families can find other options that serve the needs of their students better.

Regarding Covid, it is past time to move on, as has the rest of the country, and most of the rest of the world. It is no longer a serious threat. Families have options to vaccinate, mask, or approach their health how they choose. There is simply no scientific reason for the district to have any restrictions or requirements for Covid moving forward. It is negatively affecting our students psychologically & developmentally, and forcing parents to other schooling options that respect the actual important aspects of learning.

I urge you to consider the motivation behind your decisions. Our children are vulnerable. Our families need us to be a place they can trust. No funding, partnerships, or political motivations should be driving these decisions. The lives at stake are far too valuable. Our community needs to know that our students are safe, parents' values and beliefs are respected and honored, and schools are prioritizing our kids' mental and emotional health. When these things are in place, learning can take place and students can thrive.

**Submitted:** 7/11/2022 13:18:41

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## Carmela Guerrero

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

Hola Directores de Salem-Keizer,

Mi nombre es Carmela Guerrero y soy madre de una hija en la Stephens Middle School. Les escribo hoy para apoyar el prohibir de armas en propiedades del distrito de Salem-Keizer. No hay ninguna razon por la cual la armas debirian ser permitidas en las escuelas. Las armas son peligrosas y ponen en riesgo a nuestros hijos. Por favor hagan lo correcto y prohiban las armas. Gracias.

Auto translated:

Hello Directors of Salem-Keizer,

My name is Carmela Guerrero and I am the mother of a daughter at Stephens Middle School. I am writing to you today to support a gun ban on properties in the Salem-Keizer district. There is no reason why weapons should be allowed in the schools. Guns are dangerous and put our children at risk. Please do the right thing and ban guns. Thank you.

Submitted: 7/11/2022 14:57:41