

# Oregon looks at gun locks

## Bill would give violators fines

By **FEDOR ZARKHIN**  
*The Oregonian*

Bills in the Legislature this session would require Oregonians to lock up their guns when not in use and allow cities, counties and schools to restrict where people can take their guns.

Lawmakers and advocates have tried at least three times to enact what is the most contentious of three gun control proposals now before lawmakers: that owners store their guns securely or face substantial penalties.

But supporters appear bullish that this is the year it will happen.

"Kids are dying," said Hillsboro Democrat Janeen Sollman, one of House Bill 4005's main sponsors. "And we need to make sure we're putting public peace, health and safety above all."

Sollman said 22 representatives have signed on as sponsors, as have six senators. Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum supports the bill, too.

It softens some of the tougher aspects of previous bills — it calls for fines not criminal charges for violations and gives gun owners more time to tell police if their guns have gone missing.

The bill is sufficiently moderate, Sollman said, that one of Oregon's particularly vocal gun control groups doesn't support it, while at the same time it's sufficiently strong that Oregon gun rights groups are against it.

"I feel like we're in a very good place," said co-sponsor Rep. Rachel Prusak, D-West Linn, touting the fact that neither the Oregon Firearms Federation nor Ceasefire Oregon support the bill. "To me, that's saying we have good policy."

Even one of the Republican minority's most vociferous opponents to similar proposals in the past thinks the storage bill has a good chance of passing.

"I just know that these gun bills are a priority for many of the leadership and the majority party," said Rep. Bill Post of Keizer. "So I would assume they're going to push these through."

Sollman and the other sponsors' goal is to reduce gun violence and youth suicide.

In 2017, 529 people died from gun injuries across the state, according to the Oregon Health Authority, about

the same rate per 100,000 people as the United States as a whole. About four in five of the gun deaths in Oregon were suicides.

A 2019 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association determined that getting adults to lock up their guns could prevent as many as 32% of youth firearm deaths.

Already, people on all sides have submitted hundreds of comments to the Legislature and testified for nearly three hours on Feb. 7 to the House Judiciary Committee, the first stop for the bill.

One Oregon woman wrote to recount the grief she has suffered since her daughter killed herself after breaking up with her boyfriend and turning his unlocked gun on herself.

*'THE GUN ENTHUSIASTS THINK IT'S VERY DANGEROUS TO HAVE A GUN-FREE ENVIRONMENT. AND PEOPLE LIKE ME — THE MORE GUNS, THE MORE DANGEROUS. UNDER THIS BILL, NEITHER SIDE WOULD PREVAIL.'*

State Sen. Ginny Burdick

"Those who oppose gun safety regulations are clearly detached from this gut-wrenching agony," Juliet Peterson wrote.

Medford resident Darren Davidson, meanwhile, testified that the bill is flawed because it "would render firearms useless when most needed, in self defense situations."

HB4005 spells out what gun owners must do to prevent their guns from getting into the wrong hands and the penalties for violating those rules.

With some exceptions, anyone with a gun not in use would have to lock it up with a trigger or cable lock or keep it inside a locked container or a gun room. It will be the Oregon Health Authority's job to set the minimum standards for lock devices under the bill.

The punishment for violating the law would be \$500. But if someone under 18 gets the gun because of a violation, the maximum fine goes up to \$2,000. In what would be the biggest penalty, a gun owner would be responsible for any injuries caused by the gun at any point within two years

after a violation.

Other provisions would require owners to lock their guns before giving them to somebody else and tell authorities if their gun has been stolen or lost within 72 hours of realizing it's missing.

There's also the possibility that Oregonians will vote on the proposal in November, if it doesn't become law this session. A prominent Portland gun control advocate, Henry Wessinger, is in process of putting an initiative on the ballot with a similar gun storage proposal.

Gun rights groups have challenged the initiative, and Wessinger is waiting for the Oregon Supreme Court to make a ruling before he and the organization he leads, State of Safety Action, can start collecting signatures.

# Housing: 'Talks are proceeding well'

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group, now a nonprofit called Copeland Commons, hoped to create affordable and workforce-priced housing in the building.

"Our talks are proceeding well," Garver said. "We're working through questions that both sides of the partnership have and we're moving in a good direction."

All plans are preliminary at this point, and funding will determine what can be created. Innovative Housing is waiting for the state to publish its guidelines for key grants.

Bill Van Nostran, the pastor of First Presbyterian who spearheaded the effort to buy the property, estimates it will cost nearly \$3 million just to refurbish the building.

But Van Nostran said they have also discussed the possibility of applying for permitting and funding to build a second structure next door to the east.

"It could almost double the number of units," he said. "That just sounds

intriguing to me."

The building — often referred to as the State Hotel — already includes 50 units on its second and third floors. Copeland Commons hopes to make around 40 units available, but Van Nostran said even more space may be opened up on the ground floor and in the basement in partnership with Innovative Housing.

Some retail space will remain at the street level and there are no plans to make existing businesses move.

"We've tried to assure (Terry Erickson, the owner of Mallalternative) it's business as usual," Van Nostran said.

Renovating the building and operating it for housing is a massive undertaking, and one the board of Copeland Commons discovered may be beyond them alone, Van Nostran said.

Innovative Housing would bring important resources, oversight and expertise to the project, he said.

For Innovative Housing,

it would make sense to have another housing project in Astoria.

The nonprofit plans to create 40 new studio and one-bedroom apartments in the former Waldorf Hotel, also known as the Merwyn.

"We always wanted to have a companion property to the Merwyn," Garver said. "The Merwyn on its own is a little bit small to operate at an optimal level. It's nicer when you have companion properties so you can share management services and maintenance."

Not only has First Presbyterian attracted the interest of Innovative Housing, but they have fielded calls from other churches in the region about starting similar projects. They have also received offers of volunteer work groups.

"The bottom line for me is that we, this small group of interested Presbyterians, set out to be a catalyst to see if we couldn't stimulate interest enough and create available, affordable housing," Van Nostran said.

# Sullivan: Campaign kickoff on Feb. 23

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This year, a Knappa teacher, Courtney Bangs, is vying for the position. Bangs has been endorsed by #TimberUnity and has received campaign contributions from the timber industry, including Hampton Lumber.

Sullivan said one of her central goals is a balanced and sustainable approach to forestry management.

Her other goals include expanding the county's workforce and local economic opportunities, increasing the county's supply of affordable housing and protecting water resources.

"Working together, we can keep Clatsop County a great place to live, to raise

families, and to retire. I will use my experience and leadership at the county level to find common ground to deal with the opportunities and challenges facing Clatsop County, especially District 4," Sullivan said in an email.

Commissioners selected Sullivan in January to be the board's chairwoman after she served as vice chair last year.

Sullivan moved to Clatsop County in 2007 from Portland, where she managed an 80-unit affordable housing building for the Housing Authority of Portland.

Since moving, she has



**Kathleen Sullivan**

worked in the local hospitality industry. Her sister and brother-in-law, Iris Sullivan and Joe Garrison, are founders of the Blue Scorcher Bakery and Cafe.

Sullivan grew up in a small farming community in Michigan. She earned a degree in secondary education from Michigan State University and a master's degree from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. She worked as a teacher in Brownsville, Texas, St. Paul, Minnesota, and in rural Michigan.

Sullivan is hosting a campaign kickoff party from 2 to 4 p.m. on Feb. 23 at the Wickiup Grange in Svensen.

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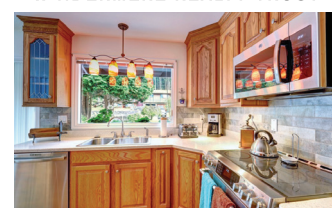
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## Providence's North Coast cardiology team invites you to celebrate your healthy heart.

We're proud to welcome Gary Greenberg, M.D. to Providence's cardiology team. From left to right: Gary Greenberg, M.D.; Zach Caverley, PA-C; Robert Morse, D.O.; and Masud Ahmad, M.D.

Join us as we celebrate National Heart Month with these fun and free heart-healthy offerings.

### ♥ Women's Healthy Heart Tea

Join Providence Seaside registered dietitian, **Beth Schwenk, RD, LD** to learn heart-smart eating habits. Light luncheon provided.

**12:15 p.m., Friday, Feb. 14**

Providence Seaside Hospital, Education Room A, 725 S. Wahanna Road

### ♥ Know Your Numbers

Knowing your numbers is important for heart health. This heart health screening will help you identify your blood pressure, pulse, height, weight and body mass index (BMI).

**1-4 p.m., Friday, Feb. 28**

Providence Seaside Clinic, Suite 101, 725 S. Wahanna Road

### ♥ Heart Talk and Walk

Providence cardiologist, **Robert Morse, D.O.**, and **Zach Caverley, PA-C** invite you to join them for a presentation on heart health followed by a walk on the prom.

**10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 29**

Best Western Plus Ocean View Resort, 414 N. Prom



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