



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE OREGON SENATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2024

Connor Radnovich, 503-986-1600
connor.radnovich@oregonlegislature.gov

Senate Approves Task Force on Community Safety and Firearm Suicide Prevention

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the Oregon Senate passed [Senate Bill 1503](#) with bipartisan support. The bill creates the Community Safety and Firearm Suicide Prevention Task Force, a 17-member panel charged with developing recommendations for ways to reduce suicides by firearm and associated community safety risks.

Oregon has the 17th-highest suicide rate in the nation, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Firearm suicides account for more than half of Oregon's suicide annually, with veterans, men, and people over 75 at particular risk.

"Firearm suicides are a statewide problem and a serious public health risk," said **Senate President Rob Wagner (D-Lake Oswego)**, co-chief sponsor of SB 1503. "This task force will provide the Legislature with evidenced-based, proven steps we can take to reduce firearm suicides, improve public safety, and support Oregonians in crisis."

SB 1503 identifies several issues the task force will study, including:

- How to better support youth and rural Oregonians experiencing suicidal ideation
- Barriers to suicide prevention support
- Barriers to implementing best practices for community safety and suicide prevention
- How domestic violence is a risk factor for community safety threats and suicide
- Risks to first responders

The task force will include a bipartisan group of four legislators and 13 community members, including: a representative of a state public health agency; a representative of a community-based firearm safety and protocols program; a behavioral health professional or provider; an adult behavioral health provider; a psychologist who works with youth; a tribal representative from a suicide prevention program; a representative of law enforcement; and a professional who works in veterans' mental health.

The first report from the task force will be due to the Legislature in September 2024. The bill now moves to the Oregon House of Representatives for consideration.

###