

Select Language ▼

Multnomah County

Multnomah County Board approves first reading of gun safety ordinance

Thursday, 4/18/13 - 5:33 pm



Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill speaks in support of a gun safety ordinance that he says will address public safety in the community.

In the aftermath of mass shootings in Clackamas Town Center and Newtown, Conn., Multnomah County's Board of Commissioners moved forward on an [ordinance](#) Thursday to address illegal gun use in the county.

The board's unanimous vote on April 18 to approve the first reading of the ordinance moves the matter to a second, and final, reading on April 25.

The county [ordinance](#) would restrict the possession of a loaded firearm in a public place with certain [exceptions](#), including licensed hunters engaged in lawful hunting, target shooters at an established target shooting area, people licensed to carry a concealed weapon, and law enforcement officers in the performance of their official duty.

The ordinance also would restrict the discharge of a firearm in the county, require firearm owners to prevent access to firearms by children, require reporting the theft of a firearm within 24 hours, and extend curfew hours for minors who have been found by a court to have possessed, bought, used, transferred or transported a firearm and are under supervision.

The ordinance co-sponsored by [Commissioner Deborah Kafoury](#) and [Chair Jeff Cogen](#) largely mirrors already-successful ordinances in the city of Portland.

"I agree this ordinance is not the entire solution. But it is part of the solution," Commissioner Kafoury said, citing state pre-emptions on other worthwhile local gun regulations. "Doing nothing is not an option. I think it is small and incremental steps that are going to save people's lives."

Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill praised the ordinance for striking the right balance for the lawful use of firearms and improved public safety. And he said the county ordinance would be an asset because it makes the regulations consistent countywide.

"I completely support this responsible balanced effort to address public safety in our community," Underhill said.

Other law enforcement officials speaking on behalf of the ordinance were Sheriff Dan Staton and Portland Police Lt. Art Nakamura, representing Police Chief Mike Reese.

Ordinance supporters also included Ceasefire Oregon president Elise Gautier, OHSU pediatrician Dr. Melissa Weddle, Kaiser Permanente pediatrician Dr. Virginia Feldman, Friendly House executive director Vaune Albanese, Jennifer Lynch of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, Family Forward Oregon executive director Andrea Paluso and Jenna Passalacqua, daughter of Clackamas Town Center shooting victim Cindy Yuille.

"It's vital that we come together to find common ground to reduce gun violence in our communities," Passalacqua said. "This ordinance is definitely a step in the right direction."

Before the board's unanimous vote to send the ordinance to a final reading on April 25, Chair Cogen extolled the ordinance as a series of common-sense gun safety measures that make the community safer while respecting the Second Amendment.

"We are suffering an epidemic of violence, senselessly losing thousands of our residents. And as elected leaders, it's incumbent on us to try and fix it," Chair Cogen said. "We can't let the perfect get in the way of the good or the ideal in the way of the achievable. What this is, is what's achievable."