



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 98-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 12, 2018

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair

Re: **SJM 202**, Urging Congressional action on assault-style weapons and accessories – **Support**

The League of Women Voters believes that government must play an active role in the reduction of gun violence. Thus, we applaud the sentiments behind SJM 202—a plea for Congress to enact legislation to define and regulate semiautomatic assault weapons, as well as rapid fire enhancing accessories known as bump stocks. We equally applaud the excellent summary of facts assembled in the Whereas statements of the bill. Given the proliferation of these weapons and accessories and the rising death toll from mass shootings, we agree it is long past time for Congress to act.

However, the League would like to express some caveats about our support for SJM 202. First, in our opinion, a plea for Congressional action from the Oregon Legislature, however well intentioned, is unlikely to inspire Congressional action. It is certainly no secret that Congress has been unable to enact any constructive gun safety laws for many years, despite horrific mass shooting events, largely due to the well-funded obstructionist tactics of the gun lobby and the current state of political polarization at the national level.

Secondly, while a federal ban on assault weapons would have the most impact, we believe that it is up to *all* levels of government to do their part in the reduction of gun violence. The Supreme Court has thus far refused to review state and local bans or restrictions on semiautomatic weapons. Line 19 of this bill is correct in stating: “Whereas eight states define and regulate or ban semiautomatic assault weapons...” In fact, eight jurisdictions now ban assault weapons, including Connecticut, New York, California, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and D.C., while Minnesota and Virginia have laws to regulate them. Unfortunately, Oregon is conspicuously missing from this list. In our opinion, this joint memorial would have much more credibility if Oregon legislators followed the courage of their convictions by passing a statewide ban on assault weapons.

The League thanks you for the strong pro-active language in this bill. Congress needs to hear our voices loud and strong. However, if Congress refuses to make gun safety a priority, we strongly urge legislators to pass a bill in the 2019 session to ban semiautomatic assault weapons in the state of Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Marge Easley in black ink.

Marge Easley
LWVOR Gun Safety Portfolio