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**New gun safety nonprofit State of Safety
launches in Oregon**

The group seeks to address the epidemic of gun violence

PORTLAND, Ore. – Local residents announced today the formation of a new nonprofit group, State of Safety, dedicated to making Oregon safe from gun violence.

State of Safety is a nonpartisan organization working to reduce gun violence and promote gun safety for all Oregonians. The nonprofit will provide gun safety information and education of evidence-based data on what policies, regulations and laws work best to reduce gun violence and promote responsible gun ownership.

Established to fill a gap in Oregon's gun violence prevention movement, the nonprofit will collaborate with public health, education and gun safety partners around the state, as well as national organizations committed to reducing gun violence. The effort will bring together national expertise with local perspective on how to best advance gun violence prevention within the state of Oregon.

"We believe everyone has the right to be safe from gun violence," said State of Safety executive director Henry Wessinger. "As we spoke to people across the state, we concluded there was a need for an Oregon-based organization working on common sense approaches to reduce gun violence and promote gun safety. State of Safety will fill that critical role."

Wessinger is a fifth-generation Oregonian and Portland native, who retired from a 32-year career in the financial service industry in 2014. Following the October 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas and the February 2018 mass shooting in Parkland, Florida, Wessinger committed to working to reduce gun violence in Oregon.

State of Safety outlined two activities that will launch within the next month. In collaboration with Oregon PTA, State of Safety will conduct a statewide poll of parents and educators to assess attitudes relating to school safety and gun violence. School shootings have dominated the headlines in recent years and State of Safety and Oregon PTA are seeking to find out how that has affected teachers and parents. The results will be released the second week of September 2018.

The second activity is a statewide screening tour in the fall of the Clackamas Town Center shooting documentary, "101 Seconds." The film will be followed by a town hall where participants will be encouraged to engage in a broader conversation about gun safety issues. The goal of the tour is for Oregonians, in towns across the state, to listen to each other and better understand where there are common points of view to channel a more productive dialogue. The tour will visit 11 Oregon communities and begin in Portland on September 16.

"We've found success working on gun legislation at a state level, including in Oregon," said Christian Heyne, Legislative Director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. "We think State of Safety will effectively use evidence-based information to advocate for safer communities."

"State of Safety will help drive a factual evidence-based conversation around guns in Oregon homes," said Bill Langenes, Steering Committee member of the Brady Campaign Portland Chapter. "This will help reduce the devastating but preventable gun violence that injures and kills Oregonians."

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