

Arguments against SB 1550 and SB 1551

This testimony concerns two Senate Bills (1550 & 1551), which together criminalize (as Class C Felonies) the possession of concealed firearms by holders of Oregon Concealed Handgun Licenses (CHL) on the grounds of public schools, and in or on public buildings.

As an NRA certified firearm and personal protection instructor, I can assert that these two bills create a legal minefield for law-abiding private citizens who wish to carry a legally-concealed firearm during the exercise of their daily routines. The fallout if these bills become law—and it will be just a matter of time—is that an otherwise law-abiding woman or man, with no prior criminal history, will be charged and convicted of a Class C felony with its resultant fines, jail time, and public stigma; all due to forgetting to leave their otherwise-legally carried firearm at home while running errands that could very well include a visit to a DMV office or dropping off a child in the parking lot of a public school. At the very least, passage of these bills will cause CHL holders NOT to carry a firearm out of fear that they may inadvertently enter a forbidden location some time during the day. While this may be a desired outcome of proponents of these bills, it defeats the very reason law-abiding citizens desire to carry a legally concealed firearm—as protection against a criminal encounter while away from home.

These proposed changes to the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) explicitly and singularly target the legal concealed carrying of firearms by law-enforcement-vetted and -approved private citizens. At face value, these bills can be taken in no other way than an attempt to hamstring CHL holders and dismantle CHL liberties; all this against a history of Oregon case law which clearly demonstrates that these changes are NOT necessary for “the immediate preservation of public peace, health and safety” or any other reason.

I ask the proponents of this legislation to reveal the statistical data that supports the need for these amendments. Not one handgun violation has occurred in a public school or building by an ever-growing number of CHL holders in the past two decades that demonstrates a need for these changes to the current Oregon Revised Statutes in these areas.

The fact that administrative rules against CHL holders have been ruled invalid by the highest courts of Oregon may be the reason that these changes are being entertained by this committee. But this does not legitimize passage of these bills.

While it is easy to understand why opponents of gun-owner rights would oppose all and any exercise of gun-owner rights as guaranteed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution and codified by the State of Oregon; I am puzzled how purported advocates of gun-owner rights in the Oregon State Legislature can even entertain this type of legislation (which has no basis in statistical fact or need) aimed at law-abiding Oregon citizens.

Submitted by

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