

I have just finished reading Senate Bill 1594, which like its predecessor Senate Bill 1550, criminalizes (as Class C Felonies) the possession of concealed firearms by holders of Oregon Concealed Handgun Licenses (CHL) in public schools.

As an NRA certified firearm and personal protection instructor, I can assert that this bill creates a legal minefield for the law-abiding private citizen who wishes to carry a legally concealed firearm during the exercise of their daily routines. The fallout if this bill become law—and it will just be a matter 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. Just because she or he forgot to leave their otherwise-legally carried firearm at home or in their vehicle while running errands that could very well include a visit to 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 this bill, 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.

The tens of thousands of Oregon CHL holders come from all walks of life and every political persuasion. Your good neighbor or close family friend, whom you think you know so very well, could very well be among these thousands of Oregon CHL holders. Passing this bill places them in sever legal jeopardy.

These proposed changes to the Oregon Revised Statues (ORS) explicitly and singularly target the legal concealed carrying of firearms by law-abiding citizens who have been trained in firearm safety and usage, have been fully vetted by their local sheriff department, the Oregon State Police database, and the FBI database. 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 only NOT necessary, but are absolutely unwarranted.

Sincerely,

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