

Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
Guns Owner Testimony, April 5, 2013
Roger Fletcher, Dallas, Oregon

Chairman Proznaski, members of the committee, those who support the amendments under consideration, and those who don't: my name is Roger Fletcher. I was born in Salem 75 years ago. My wife and I are 42 year residents of Dallas. We have lived the balance of our 57 years together in Odell, Ontario and Roseburg.

For as long as I can remember I have had in hand a rifle or shotgun, a fishing rod or a set of oars. I have employed a number of rifles and shotguns over the years, especially in pursuit of upland birds and big game. As I have grown older and more mature I have become more aware of my own mortality. This increased sense of mortality causes me to be much more mindful of the need to balance my right to have and use my guns against the far more important need to protect the innocents *from* my guns, as well as from those who may mean harm.

I support the Second Amendment. The June 2008 Supreme Court decision in *Washington D.C. versus Hiller* reaffirmed my right to possess a firearm for traditionally lawful purposes. However, and I quote from the syllabus of that decision: "*Like most rights, the Second Amendment Right is not unlimited. It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose.*" In other words, there is latitude in defining the kinds of firearms that may be in the hands of our citizenry, as well as managing the safe and responsible acquisition, sale or disposition, and use of firearms. I am tired of the extreme voices that use the Second Amendment as a shield against thoughtful discussion surrounding the issues of gun violence.

Like everyone, I was mortified by the tragedies at the Clackamas Town Center and the massacre at Sandy Hook. My response was grief and sadness. My thoughts and prayers continue for the victims and their families. I was floored by the NRA response to Sandy Hook. The capstone comment of that event was Wayne Lapiere's bizarre notion that "*the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.*"

I am a "good guy with a gun," but implicit in Lapierre's statement is the notion that somehow I am incomplete if my guns are not employed as a badge of citizenship. That is absurd. I define myself by the values I hold dear, including *life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*, all of which find expression in my life because of my relationships with family, friends and community.

I support the Bills on the table today. I would rather they be part of a more complete package of a comprehensive approach to gun violence, but as a practical matter they are common sense, useful steps that increase safety without violating my Second Amendment rights.

So in order of my personal priorities on these bills, I give an emphatic *Yes* to excluding guns from schools, except as a school district may decide otherwise.

I give an emphatic *Yes* to closing a significant background loophole, the private sale. I may be slightly inconvenienced by a hold on the phone while I confirm the safety of a buyer, but I know I will have done my best to assure the weapon finds its way into a lawful set of hands.

I say *Yes* to live fire training for all CHL applicants. If one of my friends here, or a Sir or Madam Galahad were engaged in an untoward situation, I want that person to be competent in discharging their firearm and in hitting what he or she intends.

And I say *Yes* to the permission requirement to carry Concealed Handguns in this and other public buildings. I was in the Capitol on February 8 during the gun rally, and as familiar and safe as I feel with my guns, the presence of firearms arms in and around this place gave even me a sense of unease for those coming to and from this place.

Thank you very much for considering these bills, and for your attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Fletcher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.