

The purpose of this letter is to formally make statements and comments regarding the consideration of adopting further state firearm regulations, specifically SB 941, SB 525, and SB 945. It is my observation, opinion, and belief that further laws restricting citizens' rights to keep and bear arms are ineffective, unconstitutional (under both the U.S. Constitution and the Oregon State Constitution), while destroying basic, universal, human rights.

Continued and regular studies by governmental agencies such as the C.D.C. and F.B.I. as well as various non-governmental organizations (not including the N.R.A., which I do not support or agree with politically) find there is no correlation between reduced gun violence and increased gun control laws. If there are any correlations between highly restrictive gun laws and gun violence, it is that where guns are heavily restricted or outlawed, there is more likelihood for gun violence, both in the U.S. and internationally, both historically and contemporarily. Homicides with firearms have steadily and significantly declined in the U.S. since the end of the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban in 2004, at the same time as firearm ownership continues to significantly increase.

While statistics quantify the fact that increased gun control creates a less safe society, it is no consolation to people who have lost loved ones to violent tragedies. While I cannot imagine the unbearable grief and despair this has wrought, these events must be ultimately weighed unemotionally, and with great impartial clarity. There is a violence issue in Western culture. Its origin and responsibility lie in the same organism: humans and their myriad social ills, not inanimate objects. People accept far worse risks everyday they get out of bed; and while the arguments that cars, heart disease, cancer, alcohol, etc., are far more dangerous and result in far more deaths than firearms are true, they come across to some as obtuse or simple minded. What this demonstrates to me is another cultural issue, one of necessity and tradition.

Whole segments of Western society can live their lives without the perceived need for firearms (paradoxically because others shoulder the burden to maintain a safe society with firearms everyday, both in law enforcement and by private citizens) and therefore don't learn relevant traditions which engender the safe and responsible use for what is for many is an effective tool and means to an end, such as putting food on the table or self-defense. These are basic human rights. As Americans we are constitutionally guaranteed to have the choice to exercise these rights, ones that allow us to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. We also are constitutionally guaranteed to not be forced by government or any other entity to abandon these rights; and that is what we have here in Oregon: a specific demographic majority along with out-of-state special interests trying to force irrational, ineffective, spurious, and superficial laws that injure law abiding citizen's rights but make no difference to a criminal's behavior.

The adoption of restrictive gun laws to maintain the image of being a progressive state and create the illusion of security, despite all evidence to the contrary, is the height of deluded and fantastical thinking by a few who want others to conform to their version of reality. This is not acceptable.

In closing, I would like to remind you of another fact: millions upon millions of people have died, their families have sacrificed (including mine), generation after generation, to preserve basic and unalienable rights of being human and being American. A few reactionary, myopic, and selfish individuals have no right to change that, and never will.

I implore you to examine these bills critically and thoroughly, and to think of those vulnerable persons who will be denied their rights and made into criminals simply because they are exercising the basic human principle of self-protection while those who would prey on them are only emboldened.

**Sincerely,
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