

Good Morning,

My wife and I are both registered Voters' and we are against HB 2505. We are both Retired Deputy Sheriff's and both retired veterans. We hold our constitutional rights in high regard, whether it is the Oregon State Constitution or the United States Constitution. They were both written by are forefathers who were wise before their time. These rights listed in the constitution are all equally important, when you start to whittle away one set of rights, eventually you must trim the rest as well.

1. Proper Firearm Storage should go hand in hand with Safe firearms handling practices. We are a state of "Shall Issue" concealed Handgun Licenses and a state that authorizes open carry outside of most large city limits. To tell an Oregonian who hunts, fishes or has a concealed carry permit that they MUST unload their firearm at home and lock it up to prevent unauthorized access basically tells the homeowner that they cannot defend their families or themselves at home as they might when out in the public during the day. We have laws already on the books to determine legal or illegal self-defense shootings. But to deprive a homeowner from the right of self-defense with a firearm at home is wrong. I the intent to ensure that children to not find and play with a loaded gun in the house or anywhere else. I firmly believe that if a loaded or unloaded firearm is left out or not safely stored inside the house and a child finds it and is hurt or killed then yes the owner of that firearm (parent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt family member or friend) living in the house should be held responsible, but we have those laws on the books, if we want to enforce them. But do not deprive the homeowner of the opportunity to defend their home and family against intruders or criminals who want to do harm. What about the homes where there are no children (minors) present, do they also have to lock up their firearms?
2. This bill failed a legal challenge last year as Measure 44 and has been recreated at HB 2505. As I have read the summary and the rationale for HB2505 we must ask ourselves these relevant and realistic facts to use to create a restrictive new law. It was tragic for the deaths at the Clackamas town Center six and half years ago. But here in Oregon that has been a onetime event (Thank God). It is also mentioned that on average 10 Children commit suicide with a firearm annually. This is also tragic, how many die from drug overdose or suicide by other means? Should we not also create a law about those methods too? Why is our suicide rate higher per capita than other states, could it be that all the children and adults that commit suicide or become active shooters have a common system, Mental Health issues, which were not identified and grew to become fatal. If they were identified and treated, then perhaps they would still be alive and the shooting at Clackamas Town Center would not have happened. But in Oregon we have made great strides at saving money when it comes to our citizens mental health, we have closed Damash Mental Health Hospital and many other facilities and placed these vulnerable people back out onto the street to be victimized or to harm fellow citizens.
3. We have had a number of children injured in Oregon because they played with firearms, would it not be better to add the NRA Eddie Eagle Course to our schools to ensure that every child knows the guns can be dangerous and to know what to do if they see or find a unsecured firearm. This training is free and could be taught annually to every child in school and we would certainly see a marked decrease in child involved accidental shooting if they were all taught firearm safety.

4. I believe that simple common-sense actions to include the NRA Eddie Eagle Child firearm Safety class would reduce firearm injuries in Oregon significantly without taking away ones right for self defense in the home.

This bill portrays all firearm owners as being careless or negligent when it comes to their firearms, I must disagree in that over 99% of Firearm owners in Oregon are very concerned and careful when it comes to Firearms in the home. Many of the “anti-gun” legislative bills this session has the best of intentions, but they are all basically a knee jerk reaction to isolated or limited firearm events that caused the loss of life and or injury to one or more citizens. These are tragic events that should have been prevented. One could argue that if we had NO Firearms in this state or this country then these tragic events would not have happened. That is true they would not have been caused by a firearm, but to say they would not have happened is very naïve. How many times have we read in the newspaper or seen on the news or, our computers, tablets or phones of incidents where someone purposefully drove their car or truck into a group of people or someone driving was not watching the road and caused an accident with or without injuries; or were intoxicated, overdosing or just high on prescription medications or illegal drugs when they or someone else was injured or killed.

If we use this same line of reasoning to keep our families and our children safe, then we should raise the driving age to 21 yrs. of age. If a child borrows the family car and has an accident (Property, injury or death) both the young adult and the parent that authorized the car to be taken should both be charged with a crime if the young adult was guilty of any of the traffic laws at the time of incident, I believe that would be fair and raising the age to drive to 21 yrs. of age would save many teenagers lives, more so than locking up all firearms. Many will say this is a dumb comparison car to firearms. But when both are used properly and as intended, they are safe for everyone, but when miss-used can have deadly ramifications.

In just about every illegal, unauthorized use of a firearm (except by criminals, but maybe them too) as part of the post shooting investigation we find that the shooter has/had mental health issues. I firmly believe we need to address this elephant in the room, both within our K-12 grades and post high school schooling. We need to protect our next generation, current generations and senior generations by identifying all those with mental health issues, early and directing them to the appropriate treatment facilities. Those individuals should have their firearm privileges taken away along with their driving and other privileges we provide in Oregon until they are determined safe or not. In Oregon today you do not have to walk or drive very far to see firsthand citizens of Oregon that have untreated mental health issues, yet most of them if they had the money, could by a firearm, Why? Our teachers in schools are all trained professionals and work with many kids every day, week, month and year and they know better than most parents if the child in school is having mental health issues, yet they are not obligated to report it, if one of their students becomes an active shooter anytime during their school years, that teacher(s) all of them should be held equally responsible, for if they would have reported it, the shooting might not have happened.

I would like to close by repeating one point, in that it is never a good law if it punishes the masses for something that might not have happened or prevented by other means. I oppose

HB 2505 and encourage you to do the same. I would be happy to discuss at any time better ways to keep our children safe and firearms in the hands of responsible Oregonians. This might be important business for the legislature, but this bill surely is not in response to any emergency in this state. Let's put our limited resources to work and educate our children (NRA Eddie Eagle Program) and the new tax dollars (New Taxes) for education in Oregon to providing our kids better mental health Identification, screening and treatment from K thru 16.

R. Coufal.