



---

# AGAINST SB-978

---

The bill of overreach



MARCH 31, 2019  
JEFF CONANT  
[jefftconant@gmail.com](mailto:jefftconant@gmail.com)

Hello and thank you for taking the time to read my written testimony today. Unfortunately, I was not prepared to make it to the meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, but the subject matter which is being addressed is nonetheless important to me.

My name is Jeff Conant and I am a father, a husband, a Portland State University graduate of 2010 and most important to this subject of this letter, I am a law-abiding, tax-paying citizen who has lived his entire life in the state of Oregon.

Here is my reasoning for why the laws in SB 978 should NOT come to pass. I'm already sure that you are all fully aware of how these laws are an infringement on our Constitutional rights Federally and at the State level. That alone should be the end of this letter. But I won't even bother to hammer away at the legality of what is being passed – I'll leave that to the lawyers. Rather I will explain why this bill, despite being perceived as an advancement of the safety of Oregonians, actually puts many people such as myself in harms way or at odds with the law for no good reason.

I will offer you a simple scenario which would put a law-abiding, CHL holding citizen at odds with the law and make society a little less safe. If we pass this bill, we are now disallowing responsible gun owners from carrying their firearm while at a wide variety of public locations. These locations include but are not limited to airports (and surrounding property), schools, colleges, universities and any number of public places that may be decided later. What this does is force law-abiding CHL holder to leave their guns in their vehicles. Leaving a gun in a vehicle puts the gun at high risk of being stolen. Please note that this is the very situation that bills like this are purportedly combating, yet in reality, are making worse. Forcing gun owners to separate from their gun will inevitably increase the likelihood of their guns falling into the wrong hands. Now, to minimize the risk of theft, the CHL holder purchases an in-vehicle safe. Mind you that most vehicles do not come from the factory with a safe installed in them so it is going to be an aftermarket safe. Also be mindful that a safe is only as secure as its link to the vehicle. A determined criminal with a crowbar or bolt cutters can get the safe open or get it away from the vehicle. Of course, the criminal could also just steal the entire vehicle. That never happens, right? The CHL holder noticing his vehicle has been compromised, immediately

alerts the police. But this is to his own demise knowing that for the next 2 years, he is now responsible for any crimes committed with his stolen property. Under this new law, despite the fact he did everything he could to secure his firearm, he is now up for criminal liability himself because he is unable to prove his gun was in a safe. Is this the way we treat a car owner when someone steals his car and runs over a pedestrian? Do we hold the car owner responsible? Would we hold him responsible for 2 years? And why was 2 years the chosen number? Why not 1 or 3? What is the logic to support holding a victim of theft responsible for the theft as much as 2 years later - other than to cause hardship for your average gun owner? How about the criminal who stole the gun and then used it in commission of a crime? Honestly, I sometimes wonder if it's because it is EASIER to track down that law-abiding citizen at a residence where he can be located and to attack him because he has a lot more to lose than a petty criminal. The scenario I described above is not the unique circumstance of a unique person. The scenario I described, in all likelihood, will be the regular experience of your average Joe or Jane who happens to be a CHL holder. This could easily be me or my neighbor on any given day. People who concealed carry live normal, productive lives that will only be hampered by this law. In addition to creating risk of gun theft by separating gun from owner, how about the risk for the owner who now is left completely defenseless? – most mass shooters pick places that are gun-free zones. This isn't my opinion, this is an easily verifiable statistic.

As far as locking up guns at home, I keep my guns locked in a safe when I am away from my home. This seems like the right thing to do. I'm nowhere around my guns and won't need to access them anyway. So why not put them in a safe? I understand the gun owner's argument: "If it's in my locked house, why should I need to go any further to secure them?" On one hand, this makes sense because it would take a criminal act to get into the house to obtain the gun in the first place. On the other hand, it isn't difficult for a determined criminal to break into an unoccupied home. Therefore, I think it is necessary to go the extra step and secure the gun in a safe at all times.

BUT... when I am at home, my gun should be accessible at all times. Invaders don't knock on your door or leave you a warning before they break in and point a gun in your face. Therefore, I err on the side of caution. If I am forced to have a trigger lock or cable lock to fumble with in

the dark when someone invites themselves into my home at 3am- I am putting my life and my family's lives at great risk. If you need to see examples of this happening in real life, please look up home invasions on Youtube and armed defender if you are so inclined. You'll learn that this isn't an uncommon occurrence. Many times it happens in broad daylight. So when is my gun "in use?" Well, I could argue that it is always in use because it must be ready to defend at a moments notice. A trigger locked gun is no more useful than having an oddly shaped rock in hand when your life is in danger. I would wager that the criminal won't have his gun trigger locked when he illegally enters my home.

You see, the point of law is to deter people from doing bad things – whether intentionally or out of gross negligence. But a law that seeks to punish people who have actually done the right thing and obeyed the law in every possible way is a WRONG law and cannot stand. This law is gratuitous and ill-composed. It seeks to force responsibility by pinning a crime on someone who did not commit one. It also goes too far with safe storage in that it renders firearms useless for real-life, self-defense scenarios. Might I suggest offering tax incentives for people who purchase safes? I have only touched on a couple of the ways in which this law would be deleterious to law-abiding citizens but I believe these are the ways which would be most harmful to gun owners. Just to reiterate, those I believe most harmful include forcing CHL holders to disarm at certain commonly used public places and the extensive liability of gun owners toward their stolen property/ crimes committed with a gun thereafter despite responsible storage and quick reporting. Thank you for listening to my testimony. Please contact me by my info below if you would like clarification.

**Jeff Conant**

**jefftconant@gmail.com**

**Cell: 503-869-0458**

**Fax: 503-491-3211**