

To the Senate Committee On Judiciary

Dear members,

I'm writing to voice my opposition to SB 978 and the currently proposed amendments. The stated goal of this omnibus bill is that it would seek to curtail gun violence. As written it will have the opposite effect. This is a tragedy in the making and as Oregonians if we really value the lives of our children (I have a 5 year old and a newborn myself) then we need to come up with real solutions to the problems plaguing our society. Let's ponder for a moment together the proposed solution (SB 978) as well as another possible solution I would like to propose.

First, SB 978's solution:

It is being proposed that we: ban untraceable firearms; that we force reporting of lost or stolen arms; that we increase "gun free" zones; and that we enforce "safe storage" across the board for all Oregonians. The thought is that if we can just keep these guns locked up, out of harm's way, and also out of public spaces then we will all be safer. This logic simply doesn't hold up to reality. Schools are already gun free zones. Supporters of SB 978 need to look long and hard in the mirror and ask yourselves – why do schools continue to be a favored target of mass shootings? Is it possibly because the shooter, who is a coward, knows they can walk right into the building and start effecting mass casualties without fear of being confronted with force in return? I believe that is the case. Why then would we want to take this failed policy to the next level? Do proponents of this legislation not see that criminals simply don't obey the laws already in place? Why give criminals more places to choose from to go on a rampage? This law is reckless and will almost assuredly, if passed as amended, result in additional injuries and / or deaths.

Now for my proposed solution:

I will give you this first as a bullet point list, and then I will explain the points in detail.

- Give kids the right to defend themselves in the school environment;
- Encourage teachers and administrators to train and carry regularly;
- Raise the legal age of adulthood from 18 to 20.

All people need to have the right to defend themselves – this includes students. We need to take away the "soft target" status that schools currently possess. It makes perfect sense to me that all kids are shown where the fire extinguisher is on day one of school, and how to operate it in an emergency. Not once in all of my 12 years in Oregon public schools (Englewood elementary, Parrish Middle School, and North Salem High School) did a student ever miss-use the fire extinguisher. Why? Because we know we would have been marched straight to the principal's office.

There is a new threat in schools that I, thankfully, did not have to worry about while I was enrolled and that is the threat of a mass shooting. What if today's students had the right to defend themselves, and were trained to fight back if a shooter broke into their classroom? I

proposed that in each middle and high school class room is a box containing baseball bats and other non-lethal weapons (could also contain high powered nerf / airsoft guns, paintball guns, pepper spray, etc.) The container would be secured by only a small zip tie, and if opened an alarm would sound, and school administrators would be notified in the office. In the event of an active shooter scenario, all classrooms would open these crates and take cover. Should the shooter enter a room at this point, students would be ready to ambush the shooter when he walked into the room. It would only take one or two active shooters going to the hospital, then promptly being put on trial, for this nationwide phenomenon to be ground to a halt. Does this idea sound a bit crazy? Sure. Is it worth trying? I honestly think it is.

My second point is that teachers need to have the option of being armed. Though I'm not an NRA member at present, I do believe their talking point about good guys with guns being the only thing that will stop a bad guy with a gun. You all believe it as well, otherwise we would not have an armed police force. Teachers who are willing and able should be encouraged, and not looked down upon, for being armed in the case of an emergency. It is commendable to want to defend yourself and others in the face of danger, and we need to get behind and support teachers who are willing to take this extra step of caring for the students they are instructing.

I will be at odds on this last point, perhaps, with other pro-2A supporters, but I would argue that a law should be passed raising the legal age of adulthood from 18 to 20. There are current studies showing that our brains don't fully mature until we are in our thirties. Given this new evidence, along with the shift of our culture towards extending the age of nurture past the age of 18, I think it is both wise and prudent to raise the legal age of adulthood to 20. In order to be fair, and to gain the support of the pro-2A community (and more importantly, to respect the Constitution), all rights must be grouped together. In addition to delaying firearm rights, we must also hold back: voting, the ability to acquire debt, the ability to enter into a contract, etc. I would also argue for simplicities sake that we lower the age of alcohol & marijuana and that we increase the age for cigarettes. Everything moves to 20. Exemptions would be granted for those serving in the police force or military, or for emancipated minors. This change would allow us to drive a bit of a wedge between the top end age of attending high school (usually 18) and the age at which your rights are acquired.

As long as there are guns in society, there will be good people and bad people who can use them. There is no way guns will ever be fully removed from our society, and even so called "less lethal" guns are still extremely lethal in the hand of a skilled shooter. The proposals included in SB 978 are "more of the same" and will do more harm chipping away at the rights of law abiding Oregonians than they will ever do towards preventing violence in our society.

I strongly encourage you to think over the solutions I'm proposing, so that the State of Oregon might be known as a true leader in solving real problems.

Lastly, I want to thank each of you how took the time to read this for your service to our state.

Though we may not agree on how to solve this problem, we are both equally committed to the betterment of our great State of Oregon.

May God bless you as you serve our State.

Respectfully,

David Lux

Keizer, Oregon