

## SB978 WITH -1 AMENDMENT

Good Morning, my name is Rick Coufal, my wife and I are both registered Voters' and we are against Senate Bill 978 -1 amendment. 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 our 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. The -1 amendment does many things that goes against our great state's traditions, in that Oregon is a pioneer state, we hunt, fish and enjoy all manner of sporting events to include those with firearms.

1. We as a nation created an age (eighteen) when young men and women were legally determined to be of age to become an adult. Yes, we have maintained the drinking age to 21 and the driving age to 16 with a license. Whereas all other responsibilities are granted at 18 yrs. of age. To raise the age to 21 to responsibly purchase a rifle or pistol or the appropriate ammunition, is a disservice to the trust that we should have for our young adults. We allow them to vote, pay taxes, join the military and to make their own legal and financial decisions, but with this amendment we tell them we do not trust you to make good decisions about firearms. Over 99% of those 18-21 yr. old's that currently own firearms are law abiding young adults who treat them with respect and use them safely. What the legal investigations in almost every active shooter incident (other than Terrorism) in this country has verified is that the shooter had mental health issues that were not discovered, being addressed or treated. Most were known by the parents, but either ignored or covered up thinking my son or daughter would never do that and they could never have any kind of Mental Disorder.
2. 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

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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?

This amendment cherry picks portions of many anti-gun bills that are currently sitting in committee here in Salem. Some of these legislative bills have the best of intentions, but they are all basically a knee jerk reaction to isolated firearm events that caused the loss of life and 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 on the phone and not watching the road caused an accident with or without injuries. Or were intoxicated or overdosing on prescription medications or illegal drugs. If we use this same line of

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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 they 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 buy 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.

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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 -1 amendment to SB 978 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 amendment surely is not in response to any emergency in this state. Let's put our limited resources and the new tax dollars (New Taxes) for education in Oregon to providing our kids better mental health screening, identification and treatment from K-16.