

My name is Daryl Meekins. I live in Linn Co. I am opposed to SB 978. To establish my credibility as a witness, I worked in law enforcement for 13 years at the City, County, State and Federal levels, 4-1/2 of that in corrections. After leaving law enforcement, I obtained a degree in Mechanical Engineering from OSU and worked as a cleanroom technician for two years and an Ergonomics Engineer for 18 years for a large semiconductor product company in Corvallis. Three of my children work as teachers in the Greater Albany Public School District and at OSU. My father was a Bronze Star and Purple Heart recipient and a POW in WWII. I served 8 years as a Port Securityman 3rd Class in the United States Coast Guard Reserve on the Oregon Coast during which time, I earned expert marksman medals on both the M16 and Baretta 92 handgun and enforced Federal Law at sea. My father was a hunter and a recreational shooter all his life and so I was raised around guns. I was a member of a youth competition shooting club in high school and my brother and I travelled around the State to various competitions. I can say that it was one of the most enjoyable and confidence building activities I've ever engaged in. I have tremendous respect for the capability of firearms and have been a Concealed Handgun Permit holder for about 30 years. I have been a student of martial arts for 20 years and an instructor in Judo, Jujitsu and Karate for 17 years. I currently teach at a club in Albany.

I am not a hunter, but am an enthusiastic recreational shooter. I would like to say, however, as much as I enjoy shooting, I am happy that so many people in our society can be completely unfamiliar with guns and do not need them in their day to day peaceful lives. If I thought that removing guns from the hands of law-abiding citizens would somehow remove the threat of violence from our country, I would give up mine tomorrow, encourage others to follow suit and never regret it. But to believe that is uninformed fantasy only. Not only would it not decrease violence, it would increase it.

The efficacy of laws that restrict gun ownership:

In 1996, England passed some of the most restrictive gun laws in the world. For several years after the ban gun violence in England and Wales increased, possibly because fewer lawful citizens had firearms and criminals, of course, don't follow laws, and therefore, still had firearms. There has been one notable mass shooting in England after the ban, suggesting the restrictions had little effect on the ability of criminals to perpetrate violence. In only one year since the gun ban, has the homicide rate dropped below immediately pre-ban levels. The homicide rate as of a year ago was 50% higher in England than since the ban. The difference is that now primarily knives but also other weapons, such as clubs, are used in place of guns. The lesson here is that you can't legislate away evil and violence by banning weapons.

Analysis of U.S. vs. U.K. crime and murder statistics on the website iGeek concludes the report with the following¹:

"Conclusion: Anyone vaguely informed on gun control issues knows is [sic] that the U.S. does not have a gun problem.

Whites and Asian are highly responsible with guns, and have a lower murder rate than almost all of Europe and the OECD countries. We have a very specific problem: [Ed.: Inner city violence and] gang-members drag our murder and crime rates averages up.

The UK has a higher white murder rate, but they use clubs and knives rather than guns. Since I'm pretty sure most people don't want to be stabbed or beaten to death, the important factor is whether you're murdered or not (not the tool the murderer uses), right?

Another thing gun-controller advocates either don't realize (or do, and lie about) is as bad as the U.S. is at murders or violent crime -- the UK is worse despite their gun control (emphasis added). England alone has

¹ http://igeek.com/w/U.S._vs_U.K._-Crime/Murder
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something like 600 murders by knife per year (and 26,370 knife crimes). Compare that to only 1,500 for the U.S., with over 5 times the population. Home invasion robberies, aggravated assault, violent rape, and stabbings are worse in the UK than in the U.S. And that's BEFORE you correct for race and gang crimes.

So in the end, when it comes to trends:

- **increasing gun control and taking away gun owners liberty only resulted in higher crimes and murder rates in the UK.**
- **In the U.S., removing those laws resulted in lowering of crime rates (emphasis added)”**

A study of Pennsylvania burglars in prison indicates that gun ownership deters overall burglary rates and markedly reduce “hot” burglaries. Several inmates stated, “that’s the way to get shot”².

If gun control legislation could actually increase the difficulty in obtaining firearms (which will likely never be the case in the US), many criminals have demonstrated various other means of perpetrating mass violence. Timothy Mcveigh used fertilizer to make a devastating military-like bomb. At the Boston Marathon, the Tsarnaev brothers used pressure vessel bombs to kill or wound almost 300. James Fields, Jr. plowed his car into a crowd during a protest in Charlottesville, Va. To attempt to stamp out violence and criminal activity by restricting a particular means by which they are carried out is a game of “whack a mole”.

Jail beds in Oregon are full. Whenever anyone is sentenced to time in a State institution, someone walks out the gate to make space available. That inmate has usually not served his full sentence. The system has become a joke to inmates. Rather than being punishment or rehabilitation, jail is a brief inconvenience; a cost of doing business for criminals. Rather than deal with the difficult problems of corrections reform and what we can do about how children are raised in our society, which are difficult problems, we are drawn to relatively simple solutions like gun control, which give the illusion of progress while having the opposite effect.

Concerning the value of concealed carry of firearms in Oregon:

According to the website Gun Facts, which bills itself as neither pro- nor anti-gun, but pro-math and anti-BS, the ability of citizens to carry concealed *decreases* crime. The FBI and researchers using their data conclude that between 3.2% and 16.5% of active shooter events have been stopped by concealed carry permit holders. Homicides with guns is 10% higher and violent crimes 11% higher in areas that disallow concealed carry³.

An article in Forbes on the results of a CDC survey of defensive gun use and the need for more research⁴:

The report included the quote: “Almost all national survey estimates indicate that defensive gun use [DGU] by victims are at least as common as offensive uses by criminals, with estimates of annual uses ranging from about 500,000 to more than 3 million, in the context of about 300,000 violent crimes involving firearms in 2008.” Adding to the credibility of this data is the conflict with expressed views by members of the CDC who wanted to show low numbers of DGU to support their opinions and agenda.

The article concludes that an analysis of the CDC data by Gary Kleck (Kleck and Gertz 1995) corroborated the report’s conclusions: “The bottom line is that it’s good to know that the original Kleck and Gertz survey

² https://guncite.com/gun_control_gcdgbur.html

³ <http://www.gunfacts.info/gun-control-myths/concealed-carry/>

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulhsieh/2018/04/30/that-time-the-cdc-asked-about-defensive-gun-uses/#54312db3299a>

replicated — approximately 1% of adult Americans did report a defensive gun use in the 1990s [with the caveat that there are still some interpretation issues with the data].

If we take the median value of 1,750,000 annual incidents of DGU in the US, with a national population of 327.2 million, DGU per capita is about 0.5% of Americans per year. US deaths from mass shootings (4 or more victims other than the shooter, typically) is 1153 deaths starting from the Texas Tower shooting in 1966 to today. There are a little over 4 million residents of Oregon. Extrapolating based on the national figure, that means that about 22,000 Oregonians have been able to deter violence against themselves or others each year. Although mass shootings are weighted toward more recent years, the average national death rate in the 53-year time period considered is about 21 per year. By my analysis, In Oregon, between 1998 and 2018, there have been five “mass” shootings, resulting in 12 deaths, or less than 1 each year.

Any death is tragic and devastating to families and I empathize with families whose relatives have been killed by criminals or the mentally ill. I have lost 5 friends to suicide, 3 of those with guns. It was not the gun that caused the deaths, it was the disease that made them want to kill themselves, as the other two showed by picking pills or drowning. To restrict the ability of about 22,000 Oregonians to protect themselves from crime in the, at best dubious, premise that this law will save 1 life, or even dozens each year is grossly flawed logic and to say the least, unfair to those 22,000.

Harvard professor and cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker⁵ makes the argument that in the last 30 years, nearly every aspect of human existence on this planet has improved greatly. We are in the most peaceful period in human history. Over that period, Pinker found that the tone of media has steadily become more morose, because it's a better business model. Most are familiar with the media's maxim, “If it bleeds it leads”. The excessive media preoccupation with public shootings is responsible for the disproportionate, inappropriate and obsessive attention given to gun violence. Inappropriate because if equal time, energy and resources were given to other means of saving lives, thousands could be spared as opposed to laws so illogical and ineffective as to cost many more lives by leaving potential victims defenseless. Cognitive psychology explains this phenomenon. We estimate risk using a mental shortcut called “the availability heuristic”. The easier it is to recall something from memory, the more probable we judge it to be. If we see horrific scenes played over and over on the news, the more likely we are to believe the media's claim that restricting lawful firearm ownership with reap beneficial results.

Peter van Uhm, commander of the Netherlands military, makes a good argument that peace in the world is due in large part to the legitimized use of violence to control and thwart war and crime, a primary tool of which is the gun⁶. The same is true of life in our country. My years in law enforcement taught me that the severity of punishment is not the most effective deterrent to crime, but rather the swiftness and inevitability of punishment. Nothing gives the impression of swift and inevitable punishment to a criminal better than facing a firearm.

“Gun free” zones are an absurd fiction based on the premise that those intending harm will give a tinker's dam about the sign and not enter with a weapon, whereas those lawful citizens who should be allowed to carry a weapon in such a place for the protection of themselves and others, that is, concealed carry permit holders, will often not carry their weapon in such a place because of fear of legal penalty, leaving the people in the building defenseless and a sitting duck for any criminal or mentally ill individual with a desire to commit violence. There is a good argument for removing “gun free zone” signs from buildings in the hopes that should there ever be an active shooter situation, there would be a CHP holder in the building who could respond.

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCm9Ng0bbEQ>

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjAsM1vAhW0>

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I do not represent a pro-gun group or lobby, so the following is my opinion alone. If legislators actually want to enact laws that help, here are some suggestions:

Helpful legislation:

- 1) Additional training for CHP holders including subjects like relevant law, shoot/don't shoot training, how to respond in the case of an officer needing assistance, how to restrain/ render first aid to a wounded criminal, and competency/marksmanship tests with yearly recertifications.
- 2) Tax breaks for products that secure firearms yet give rapid access in case of immediate need.
- 3) Tax breaks for safes and other products to secure firearms and ammunition.
- 4) Encourage the elimination of "gun free zones" since CHP holders in those areas, especially if properly trained, would make them significantly safer.
- 5) Effectively deal with the criminal justice system by the construction of "constitutionally perfect jails" that would be a real deterrent to crime. Add and enforce tough penalties for criminals caught possessing or using firearms in the commission of crimes.

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