

3 April 2019

Senator Jeff Prozanski, Chair  
Senator Kim Thatcher, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

As a native born Oregonian and resident of Multnomah County, I strongly oppose SB 978 and -1 Amendments which severely and unnecessarily burden current law-abiding firearms owners and will effectively turn them into criminals. I can only guess that fear-mongering is what prompted this restrictive legislation to be introduced and even considered. I ask - no, I implore that you not allow this piece of legislation to advance.

I have owned firearms for nearly 40 years and not once has any one of my firearms experienced an unintentional discharge either on their own nor while on my person. I am a veteran of the US Air Force and earned my Expert Marksmanship ribbon at age 19. I have been a concealed handgun license holder for many years in Oregon and over a dozen other states. I learned to hunt ducks, geese, and pheasant with my father when I was a teenager. I also am not untouched by violence. Forty years ago in April 1979 my father's brother (my Uncle, a former Multnomah County Deputy Sheriff) intentionally shot my 22 year old brother in the head with his 357 magnum service revolver, resulting in my brother's death four months later. I have experienced the gruesome carnage of violence. Not gun violence. That is a made up term. There is no such thing as gun violence. Guns are objects and thus incapable of action. Guns cannot be violent anymore than they can be loving or kind. I have a healthy respect for firearms. Every firearm owner I know does as well.

And yet through all this I can clearly see that violence comes from within the heart and mind, not out the barrel of a gun. So stop trying to control the object. Stop trying to control the gun. Stop trying to further control law-abiding citizens. Instead, focus on enforcement of existing laws. Focus on those persons that have chosen to be violent. Focus on the criminals. Crime is not as widespread as you might think.

In 2017 according to FBI data, Oregon experienced 100 homicides, of which 58 involved firearms. Of those, 34 are known to have involved handguns, but only two each involved rifles or shotguns. Another 20 were committed with unidentified firearms. In 2016, according to an Oregon state government website, there were 498 traffic fatalities and 44,629 people sustained injuries. The leading causes of death in the state are cancer, heart disease, accidents (undefined), chronic lower respiratory disease and stroke. Far more people die from complications from Alzheimer's disease than are fatally shot, and even diabetes claims more lives than gunshot wounds. Last year, murder declined more than 11 percent in Oregon.

With that all said, I hope you can see that further restricting law abiding citizens such as myself will accomplish nothing towards reducing crime. I sincerely hope your careful consideration of this matter comes not from a desire of absolute control of the people, but rather from a desire to serve the people which will lead you to stop this legislation in its tracks. I am currently a law-abiding Citizen. Please don't turn me into a criminal - for should SB 978 become law, I will not comply.

Respectfully,

Marvin Luther  
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